Connie from Gerald
S. Simon & S. Jude's day.
Oct 28 1908.

GHIRLANDAIO

The Rev H V LeBas

from the author

Master's Lodge

Charterhouse.

Dec 25 1909

Giovanna Degli Albizzi

GHIRLANDAIO

By

GERALD S. DAVIES

WITH 50 PLATES

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PREFACE

IN putting forth this book, which is, I believe, the first separate monograph in English on the work of this artist, I make no apology for the attempt, however much may be needed for the imperfection of the achievement. Ghirlandaio is one who can be known in his full strength only to those who are familiar with the great frescoes which he has left upon the walls of Rome and Florence. The few genuine easel pictures from his hand which have reached the Museums of the North do not represent him at his best. It is with the view of making it easier for the English reader to set this painter, so essentially Florentine, in his true place in the history of the art of his country that I have endeavoured to summarise the leading features of the Life and Work of Domenico Ghirlandaio. A mere glance at the length of the book will show the reader that I do not pretend to have written an exhaustive treatise.

My thanks are due to Dr. J. H. W. Laing, the editor of this series, for his invaluable aid in looking over the proofs: to Mr. George Salting and to Mr. J. Pierpont Morgan for permitting the reproduction of their pictures: to the authorities of Sta. Maria Novella for their kindness in allowing me access to the frescoes, and to many others who, by various courtesies, have helped me in my task.

GERALD S. DAVIES

GODALMING, 1908

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Frontispiece—Giovanna degli Albizzi. *Collection of Mr. J. Pierpont Morgan.*

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

GHIRLANDAIO

CHAPTER I

THE GHIRLANDAIO FAMILY

DOMENICO di Tommaso di Currado di Doffo Bigordi[1] was, as this full title explains, the son of Tommaso Bigordi, a goldsmith, known as del Ghirlandaio, either because he himself had earned a name as a maker of the gold and silver garlands with which the girls of Florence decked their hair, or because his fathers before him, Currado and Doffo, had done so. Vasari, indeed, says that Tommaso had been the first to fashion such ornaments, but he had surely forgotten the pictures of earlier masters which display them, and the occasional sumptuary laws of Florence which forbade them. The word Ghirlandaio can stand for little more than *orafo*, goldsmith. In the year 1480 Tommaso in his income tax return (*denunzia dei beni*) describes himself, however, not as '*orafo*' but as '*sensale*' or broker. There is no reason that he should not have combined the professions, especially as we find the young Domenico at once apprenticed to the art which was hereditary in the family. Possibly, however, by the year 1480, when Domenico as well as his brothers had adopted the art of the painter, the father, deprived of the help of

[1] Domenico himself wrote his family name Bighordi, and so inscribed it in the fresco in Sta. Maria Novella of the 'Birth of the Virgin.' In the same fresco also is found the form Grillandai (*i.e.* the brothers del Grillandaio), and this is how it appears in many documents. I have, however, thought it best to employ throughout this book the usual spelling of the name.

three sons, had abandoned his goldsmith's *bottega* and taken to another trade.

The same *denunzia* gives us the birth-dates of his sons. Domenico, born in 1449; David, 1454; Benedetto, 1458; these being all sons of his first wife, Costanza Nucci, who died in 1462 when Domenico was thirteen. A daughter, Alessandra, by the second wife, married the painter Bastiano Mainardi, of whom we shall have much to say in these pages.

The list of great sculptors and painters who received their first training as goldsmiths, or who combined these arts, is so striking, and has so much to tell us of the spirit which lay at the root of Italian art in the fifteenth century, that one may with advantage quote a few of the most important names, such as Orcagna, Luca della Robbia, Brunelleschi, Ghiberti, Verrocchio, Pollaiuolo, Botticelli, Francia, Andrea del Sarto, Cristoforo Romano, Benvenuto Cellini. The truth which we learn from these instances, and from many others, in which men passed with perfect ease from the practice of one art or craft to the practice of another, is that whether a man was destined to be painter or sculptor, architect or engineer, goldsmith, intarsiatore, wood carver, glass painter, mosaicist, or even an embroiderer of ladies' dresses, he received up to the point at which his way diverged into the special technique of his craft, and even after that, in each case the same training. The foundation for one and all of these arts was thorough drawing, especially of the human figure. If the young apprentice obtained some mastery in that, the door lay open to him which led to success in any art or craft to which his special taste might lead him. And this first training was as a rule given to him not through the medium of any art schools, technical schools, or the like, which indeed had no existence,[1] but in the actual *bottega* or workshop of some practical painter or sculptor. In other words,

[1] The well-known school of Bertoldo, under the Medici protection, in the gardens of S. Marco, seems to be a contradiction of my statement, but it is evident that even in that case selection was made from the most promising young artists in the *botteghe* of Florence, as in the case of Michelangelo and Granacci.

Anderson Sta. Maria Novella

TOMMASO AND DOMENICO GHIRLANDAIO

the artists of Italy learnt their craft not in a school but in a workshop. And this training, with its wholesome thoroughness, its inspiring realities, and its freedom from the dilettante element, so far from producing narrow specialists or men of one art, seems to have had exactly the other result. We learn from Vasari that when Filippo Brunelleschi was sworn in to the Guild of the Goldsmiths he was at once placed, not in any school, for they had none, but under a master craftsman to learn his art, and from this workshop he goes out furnished with the training which made him at once goldsmith, sculptor, architect.

Of Tommaso's work as a goldsmith we have no surviving instance. Vasari quotes as examples of his skill only certain silver vessels and lamps which he made for the church of the Annunziata in Florence, but which disappeared during the siege of Florence in 1529, and he attributes Tommaso's popularity as a goldsmith mainly to his garlands. These details of Vasari are, as we have seen, somewhat shadowy. What is clear is that his eldest son, Domenico, received his early training in his father's workshop, and presently preferring the art of painting, was placed under Alesso Baldovinetti, who lived outside the Faenza gate, and had perhaps a higher reputation in his own day in his own city than he has since maintained. We are not able to say who were the companions of Domenico in Alesso's workshop.

Here, then, Domenico del Ghirlandaio parts company with the special practice of the art which had given to his family the name which he was to make famous by another art. So far as we know, he never again stepped aside from the practice of painting to put his hand to brooch or garland. The life that was to end so early—he died at forty-four—was too crowded with other achievement to leave time for any return to the craft of his boyhood. But the goldsmith's training was with him to the end, shining out through all his works, first and foremost in the love of clear and definite form, enclosed by outline rather than surrounded by atmosphere,

and by his precise and accurate drawing of detail, but perhaps more visibly in the carefully wrought ornament of his architectural canopies and pilasters, which might almost be the work of a niello worker written very large—too much so, indeed, in some cases. But most of all one sees the record of his first love, as one does also to a less extent, in those other goldsmiths, Botticelli and Verrocchio, in the manifest delight with which he handles the jewelled braveries, the gold brocades of his stately Florentine maidens, the pearls, the topaz, the carbuncles which glitter at the breast or mitre of his saints and bishops. One may allow oneself the pleasant fancy that some of these are records of the workshop triumphs of the old Grillandaio firm. One brooch in particular, a large oval set with great pearls about a single carbuncle, occurs with slight variations so often that one is tempted to think that it may have been some well-known masterpiece of Tommaso's skill, recorded with loving pride by the son. It is reserved, I think, by Domenico for his Madonnas.[1]

Alesso Baldovinetti,[2] to whom the young ex-goldsmith was now entrusted, was a painter certainly not of the first interest, but as certainly worthy of a place among the second rank of fifteenth-century Florentines. He belonged to a rich merchant family, and had abandoned commerce for painting. Vasari indeed leads us to think that he worked a good deal at his ease, being prosperous enough to follow his own bent. But Vasari is careful to add that he was most patient and hard-working, that he drew very well, had a special talent for the close imitation of natural objects, and was fond of dangerous experiments with oils and varnishes. Perhaps to the latter propensity is due the disappearance of so many of the wall paintings which Vasari mentions. A chapel in Sta. Trinita (destroyed about 1760) is specially named as an instance in which Baldovinetti had mixed his colours with

[1] It will be found in the 'Visitation,' No. 1321, Louvre; the 'Madonna Enthroned,' 66, Accademia, Florence; the same subject in the Uffizi, 1297 (where the large jewel is blue).

[2] It is believed by some critics that Verrocchio learnt the technics of painting under Baldovinetti. See *Verrocchio*. Maud Cruttwell: London, 1904.

Alinari *Uffizi*

MADONNA ENTHRONED
(A. BALDOVINETTI)

yolk of egg and boiled varnish, believing that the frescoes would thereby be preserved from damp. But the results were disastrous, and it is interesting to remember that his pupil, Domenico Ghirlandaio, who afterwards was to paint the Sassetti frescoes in the church in which Baldovinetti's work was dropping from the wall, resolutely adhered from first to last to the old traditional methods of fresco and tempera, refusing all the new and tempting mixtures which offered richness and depth of colour, but had as yet no proved permanence. It indicates the sound sense which marked the man in his whole career that he should have trusted his own judgment and taken his own line in this matter from the first. He had doubtless seen the wonderful concoctions of the Baldovinetti workshop, and had noted their results, resolving that what had been good enough for Giotto and Masaccio should be good enough for him. He was ready to learn from Baldovinetti's experience—young folk do not always accept second-hand experience—what he had better avoid. And it is to this avoidance of dangerous methods, and to the direct simplicity of his handling that we owe the preservation of his works, which in their life of over four hundred years have suffered less than most which were painted in his day.

We are, however, not without surviving evidence of Baldovinetti's handiwork. In the Uffizi (No. 60) is a 'Madonna Enthroned' (Plate II.), with six saints at her side, and St. Dominic and St. Francis kneeling in front—perhaps the '*tavola maggiore*' painted for the Trinita Chapel in tempera without the patent mixture, but nevertheless much repainted. The two kneeling monks are made much smaller than the Virgin, the St. John, or the other saints. They are to be thought of as living men at the time of their so kneeling, and so by the old tradition must be made smaller than the glorified saints above. The picture is indeed that of a sound painter enough (when he tried no experiments), one who saw no visions, had no strong individual aim, loved bright colours and pretty patterns, and was fond of flowers

and animals. The trees thrown against the sky above the line of the canopy, especially the orange trees, are good, and are the work of a man that loved them. There is, too, a richly painted carpet, which appears again in his San Miniato fresco. The Virgin, placid and somewhat colourless, follows a little the type of Filippo Lippi, but lacks his charm. One sees, indeed, little in the true essentials of the picture which acted strongly as an influence on Domenico. The love of rich apparel, of trees against a sky, of flowers and birds, may have had their effect in encouraging Domenico in the same direction, and pictures of the scholar do certainly show delight in these details, but for the true inspiration which was to make Domenico's art what it was in other respects we can hardly look to his master.

What has been said of this picture applies again to the frescoes in San Miniato in the chapel which contains Antonio Rossellino's beautiful monument to the Cardinal of Portugal, Giacomo di Lusitania. It was formerly believed that Antonio del Pollaiuolo had had a share in these frescoes, but documents found in late years have proved that Baldovinetti executed them alone. The 'Annunciation,' on the wall opposite to the tomb, in many parts a wreck, in others much repainted, was gorgeous once—the Virgin in blue and cloth of gold, her feet in gold-embroidered slippers resting on a rich Oriental carpet, the Announcing Angel in gold brocade with peacock's wings. This angel, indeed, has some suggestion of the type which Domenico, and Mainardi working with him, used in this same subject afterwards. Something of a memory of this Virgin may perhaps be found in Domenico's early work at Brozzi. For the present all that one need say of the San Miniato fresco is that it is the work of a man who was more likely to teach the value of rich pattern and gorgeous detail than to inspire a painter of Madonnas.

The third existing work of Baldovinetti is a fresco in the portico of the Annunziata at Florence, on the left of the main door. The subject is the 'Nativity,' and even in Lanzi's day the fresco was

so ruined that the design only remained, the colour having passed away. The green flowered robe of the Virgin has indeed been restored to perish once again. Baldovinetti has been employing one of his processes, and the fresco would not be worth quoting but for the fact that the surviving design shows a certain strength in Baldovinetti's art which is not revealed to us in his other works.[1] We may pass over the obvious defects—the emptiness of the composition, the lack of cohesion, the isolation of the figure of the kneeling Virgin from the adoring shepherds, the childish spottiness of the landscape (in which Valdarno towards Lucca seems to be shown), and turn to the finely drawn ivy which climbs the ruined wall, and to the leafage against the sky above. This is given with a naturalism which seems to have been born out of its century, and when we take it in conjunction with the admirable drawing of the donkey, which somehow escaped the notice of Vasari, though he saw the snake upon the wall, we seem to see in Baldovinetti a man who, if he had been born in a later age, when men might devote themselves to the painting of beast, or flower, or anything else for its own sake without the necessary presence of the Madonna and the saints, would have been amongst the first of *animaliers*. Here certainly, in this love of animals, it is only fair to set down to Baldovinetti's account the same characteristic which reappears in the work of his greater pupil. And though the ruined state of the fresco makes it almost impossible to speak with any safety on such a point as the atmospheric effect of a picture, depending as it must on subtle gradations of tone which time and decay not only obliterate but also often simulate, yet there does seem to belong to this landscape, in spite of the stiffness of its detail, a certain atmospheric breadth which may have been not without its share in turning Domenico Ghirlandaio's studies in the same direction. It remains only to say to the honour of Baldovinetti that,

[1] Baldovinetti is believed—there is no evidence, except style perhaps, and kindred tastes certainly—to have been a pupil of Paolo Uccelli. He was born in 1427, and would therefore have been nineteen when Paolo was painting in the Chiostro Verde of Sta. Maria Novella.

like Ghirlandaio himself, he was ready to put into his painting more work than he was paid for. A document exists which shows that his Sta. Trinita frescoes were to be paid for after five years of work at 200 gold florins. This work was estimated by a commission of four such painters as Cosimo Rosselli, Benozzo Gozzoli, Pietro Perugino, and Filippino Lippi at 1000 gold florins—a double testimony to Baldovinetti as a man and as an artist.

It has been necessary to say thus much of the man in whose *bottega* Domenico learnt the painter's craft, and saw the example of an artist of high character, though not of quite the highest achievement. And as we pass on we shall, at any rate in the earliest work of the young painter, be able to speak of possible memories of these years spent with Baldovinetti outside the Porta Faenza. But it is not, as I have already said, from this source that the true inspirations of Domenico's art were to come, so much as from the other influences which in that age were the birthright of every artist born within the sound of the Campanile bell, and baptized in the font of San Giovanni. From Baldovinetti Domenico could learn the technics of his craft, could learn also from the spirit of the honourable old craftsman lessons, to an artist, still better worth learning, but beyond this we may hardly go. At this point, therefore, it will be well to pause and look round Florence of that day to see what influences there were in the work that had been done and was being done within her walls that might shape the aims and give direction to the art of such a one as Ghirlandaio.

CHAPTER II

EARLY INFLUENCES

FOR convenience sake let us make arbitrary choice of the year 1466, at which time Domenico Ghirlandaio was seventeen, to commence our survey. If the reader will mentally remove from Florence all that has been added to it since that year, of building, picture, statue, he will be surprised to find how large a proportion of that which is best in her art was already complete, and how great the store of treasure which she already contained. It is true that we should feel the loss of much which was presently to be created by those whose day was not yet come —by Botticelli and Perugino, by Lionardo, by Andrea del Sarto, Raphael, Michelangelo; but we should still have a city rich in the best art beyond any other city in the world. The Duomo had already received the best of what it now contains, and little, save the 'Pietà' of Michelangelo, was absent which might not be spared. Giotto's Tower, The Baptistry, Or San Michele, were practically in the very guise in which we see them now. In San Marco, Fra Angelico's paintings were still fresh upon the walls: Santa Croce, with the frescoes of Giotto and his school, was almost as we see it now; hardly a painting or a monument of the highest worth has been added to it since. In Santa Maria Novella the same is true. The Green Cloister, the Spanish Chapel, Orcagna's 'Paradise,' Masaccio's 'Annunciation' were for the eyes of Ghirlandaio as for ours, but nearly forty years were to pass before Filippino Lippi would have added the frescoes of the Strozzi Chapel, while in the Choir itself, where Ghirlandaio's

own fame was presently to be won, Orcagna's series of the lives of St. Mary and St. John were already far advanced in decay from the dampness of the walls. In St. Ambrogio, Cosimo Rosselli had already painted his fresco of the 'Miracle of the Sacrament,' a work undervalued in our own day, but with portrait groups of masterly quality, and of that intimate Florentine interest which was presently to become the hall-mark of Ghirlandaio's own art. On the walls of the convent-refectory of St. Apollonia might be seen Andrea del Castagno's great 'Cenacolo,' and in the Brancacci Chapel of the Carmine the frescoes of Masaccio and Masolino—Filippino's were not added till 1484—had for many years been the accepted guide and model of the younger generation of Florentine artists. This list, it must be remembered, takes account of only a few of the principal churches and of a very few of the chief works within those churches. It leaves out of the reckoning that vast number of frescoes with which the walls and vaults were in that day still covered, though time and decay have long since taken them from us. It takes no account of the still larger sum of altar-pieces and easel-pictures which peopled the churches small and great, visible then in the places for which their painters had designed them, and in their own sympathetic surroundings, before the evil days had come upon them in which they were to be swept in monotonous herds into the prison-house of some museum or gallery.

Here were influences enough for a young artist to choose from, if indeed the true influences were ever a matter of conscious choice and not rather of unconscious reception. For conscious choice of an influence in a young artist is often only another expression for Imitation, which ends where it begins, and must be thrown aside before the man can find himself and possess his own soul. And though no young artist, even the greatest, ever began his life's work without some necessary and inevitable degree of imitation of the work of other men, some modelling of himself upon that which he admires in others—a form of hero-worship

no more to be cast aside and no more to be reproved in Art than in any other of Life's high errands—yet in the greatest artists the signs of this imitation are very soon lost sight of and absorbed as the artist rises to his proper self. They do indeed reappear in measurable quantity at times in later work, just as in the grown man the tastes and preferences of the boy will reappear, but rather to the gain than to the loss of true and healthy personality. They no more interfere with the true personality and no more offend as mannerisms in the artist than the voice and the handwriting of a son reproducing the voice and hand of a father mar that personality, or offend us when we are reminded by it of some one that has gone before.

And though, frankly, we may not claim for Domenico Ghirlandaio that he was, in the accepted sense of the words, one of the most original, or of the most deep-sighted, or possessed of the highest forms of imagination amongst Italian artists, yet we may claim for him—and the student of his work will find himself persuaded of the claim—that his period of direct imitation of any master then dead or then living was very short, and its traces less obvious than in most men, and that in the short life that was to be granted to him he became himself earlier and was possessed of his own soul, clear in his own aims, and sure of his own preferences, sooner than ever happens to the mere follower of other men, sooner than would perhaps have happened to Domenico himself if Baldovinetti had been of the calibre to stamp more strongly on the pupil the impress of his own art.

Amongst those, then, who as past masters seem to have most influenced him through their visible works, leaving aside Baldovinetti, of whom we have already spoken, no single man seems to have had more power of inspiring him than Masaccio, who by the largeness, breadth, and dignity of his conceptions and of his handling might well stir the depths of the eager young mind, that was afterwards to express its longing 'to be allowed to fresco all the walls of Florence.' Masaccio indeed influenced

many another besides Domenico; it may be said that no Florentine who followed him in the fifteenth century escaped his influence. There is no single man whose effect upon the art of his century is quite comparable to his. He brought under his spell, especially by the frescoes of the Carmine, men of widely different temperaments and different capacities, narrowing possibly the course of Florentine Art into fewer developments, but within those limits inspiring them, each after his individual preference, to the highest achievement. For it is of all true influence to inspire rather than to make patterns. And so the influence of Masaccio sends Ghirlandaio along the path that leads to the frescoes of Sta. Maria Novella, while for Michelangelo the path leads to the vault of the Sistine. But it follows from what has been said that we must not look in Ghirlandaio's work so much for minute resemblances of drapery and pose, or even type of figure, as for the general spirit which informs the work. And as we stand before the fresco of the 'Calling of the First Apostles' in the Sistine Chapel, we are reminded irresistibly of Masaccio's 'Tribute Money' in the Carmine. The resemblance stops far short of any identity between this figure or that, between this pose or that—far short, for instance, of the direct adaptations which Raphael did not fear to use; but it lies in the less tangible, but not less convincing, presence of a similar aim in both, a something which makes one say, 'This man had seen and had admired Masaccio's masterpiece.'

I would direct attention also to the wonderful landscape of the 'Tribute Money,' the first true attempt in Italian Art to realise the breadth and atmospheric largeness of hill scenery. The landscape of Ghirlandaio, falling short indeed of Masaccio's greatness, and relapsing often into old conventions and impossible unobservant mannerisms of rock form and atmospheric value, is yet much larger in its grasp of landscape truth and in general breadth of feeling than that of many of his contemporaries, and is far more the outcome of his days spent

in the Carmine Chapel than of his days in the workshop of Baldovinetti.

But the influence of living men, those who have been producing great work, or who, working side by side by a man in his student days, are trying to produce it, sharing his ambitions and stimulating his efforts, is often far more potent than the greatest examples amongst the dead. And in Florence, in that same year of 1466 which we have decided to select, there were alive and working, just laying their work aside, or just beginning it, artists whose very presence was an inspiration. Let us consider their mere names for a moment; it will help us to realise the atmosphere in which Ghirlandaio and such as he were living. Of the earlier men, the chief representative was living almost forgotten, but still trying to work—Paolo Uccelli; old now and very poor, he and his wife, and praying only that his rest, when it came, might be given him in Santo Spirito;[1] Filippo Lippi, Benozzo Gozzoli, Andrea Verrocchio, and Cosimo Rosselli; Antonio Pollaiuolo and Luca Signorelli. These men were still alive and at work, while of the men who were more nearly of an age with Ghirlandaio, and more strictly to be called his contemporaries, Botticelli was but five years older and Lionardo da Vinci but three years younger. Filippino Lippi, Lorenzo di Credi, and Piero di Cosimo were respectively eight, ten, and thirteen years his juniors, while Perugino, who was three years his senior, did not appear in Florence till 1470.

Of these men Filippo Lippi, and more still Andrea Verrocchio, were those of whose influence we find the most visible traces in Ghirlandaio's work.[2] To Filippo's creation is due the type, which Leon Battista Alberti first imagined, of the dainty damsel, sometimes a waiting-maid, sometimes a Salomé, sometimes an angel, who appears and reappears not merely in Ghirlandaio's art, but in

[1] But he had to lie in Sta. Maria Novella, for Santo Spirito had been burnt down at the time of his death.

[2] Filippo Lippi's frescoes in the Carmine perished in the fire of 1771.

that of many later artists and of Botticelli himself, who were fascinated by the type. The prototype of them all survives in the daintily tripping figure of Filippo's 'Salomé' fresco at Prato. She will come before us, presently seen with Domenico's eyes in the frescoes of Santa Maria Novella, and in the 'Annunciation' of the Louvre.

We see too something of Filippo, but it must be owned in a somewhat weak reflection, and combined, here again not with too strong a result, with the plastic forms of Verrocchio in Ghirlandaio's Madonnas, which cannot be claimed for him as the strength of his art. And this has brought us to the mention of Verrocchio, from whom, of all artists except Masaccio, perhaps the strongest influences passed into the work of Ghirlandaio. It is visible not merely in the modelling of his flesh, but in the mould in which his earlier Madonnas and saints are cast. These are in several instances highly sculpturesque and would, if translated into bas-relief, as they might well be, partake strongly of Verrocchio's style. The close connection between the sculpture and the painting of the early and middle fifteenth century at Florence is no new discovery. There are few of the simpler Madonnas of Filippo Lippi and Botticelli, which would not make equally good bas-reliefs in the hands of a sculptor of equal sympathy. The same is true of Ghirlandaio, and, strangely enough, he has himself suggested the experiment. For in his fresco in the Sala dell' Orologio of the Palazzo Vecchio he has represented a bas-relief, painted, of course, in monochrome, of a half-length 'Madonna and Child.' If a relief could be worked upon that original by some brilliant forger of the Bastianini type, it might find its way into one of the museums of Europe under the name of Verrocchio, or his school.

Verrocchio completed his greatest picture, the 'Baptism of Christ,' now in the Accademia at Florence (No. 71), perhaps about this very year of 1466. We need not pause to examine Vasari's statement, hardly now accepted, that Lionardo, almost a

child, painted the more beautiful of the two angels. What is of greater importance to us is that the picture, as it stands, made a very strong impression upon Ghirlandaio, and remained to him the model for his treatment of the same subject in his Sta. Novella series many years later.[1] The fresco (carried out by Mainardi) is the left hand of the top row, right wall of the choir, and a comparison, made easy by means of a photograph, will show how frankly and without reserve Domenico allows his composition to follow the lines of that of the older artist. Even Verrocchio's fine endeavour to represent the appearance of objects seen in shallow running water, and the water itself, in strong current circling round the Saviour's feet, reappears in Ghirlandaio's version. This adaptation of another man's types and treatment, the close treading in the very footprints of a predecessor, which occurs often in the works of almost all Italian painters, must not be reckoned as mere plagiarism, the mere annexing of another man's ideas and motives, which, once brought into existence, should have been regarded and protected as his copyright. It is nearly always too frank and too unreserved for this. It seems rather to have become an accepted principle, a kind of a tribute to a great master or a great masterpiece, that he who created a new type or a new treatment, created it for Art; and artists of the day fearlessly used it till they found a better. There was no thought, either in the mind of the artist who did this or of those who looked at his work, and who, of course, could recognise the source of the idea, that he had annexed something that did not belong to him. The connection would be noticed with interest, but never with blame. Vasari's pages are full of such instances. And in this fashion Raphael, whose art had been sown beside all waters, pays his honour to Perugino and to Piero della Francesca,

[1] See also remarks on a fresco of the subject in S. Andrea, Brozzi, p. 150. I write the above, claiming the direct influence as from Verrocchio to Domenico without forgetting the creation of an earlier artist, a small panel of the 'Baptism' (Accademia, 233) now attributed to Baldovinetti. But if that attribution is correct, I should regard that panel as grandfather rather than father of Ghirlandaio's version.

Botticelli to Filippo, Michelangelo to Donatello. And so, too, Ghirlandaio to Verrocchio.

Of cases less notable, in which we seem to recognise influences from other masters, it will be more convenient to defer all mention till they arise in the course of our observation of the artist's work. So far it has seemed enough to name merely the chief of the men who, living still in Florence in his day, became to Domenico the objects of his young hero-worship, the men who taught him how to see rather than how to paint, the unconscious inspirers rather than the conscious studio-masters. Both to one and to the other he owed much. One thing, and that his chief possession as an artist, he could not owe to them or to any one. For as we go forward we shall see that the Domenico Ghirlandaio whom we think of and care to remember, is not the Domenico of the Madonna, or of the saint, of the angel—not even he of the Innocenti 'Adoration'—but the man of the Trinita and Ognissanti and Novella frescoes, the man who gave us the Florence and the Florentines of his day as perhaps no other man has given them to us. It is in his portraiture that his strength lies—not in his ideals nor his types. It is not by the wide reach of his imagination, but by his clear, splendid sense of the beauty of life as he saw it about him that Ghirlandaio has left to us a priceless heritage. He becomes through it a historical painter in the truest sense. He has left to us the men and women of Florence as they lived and walked in his day, and they seem even now to live and walk for us as we look at them.

And the bent of his taste, which grew presently into power, was with him from the first. Vasari tells us how in the boy's prentice days in the goldsmith's shop he was for ever trying to draw the portraits of those who passed the door, or who, perhaps, stood by as customers, to the great neglect of his goldsmithery. We need not doubt it. To the very last he seems to turn aside from the nominal purpose of his day's work—Nativity, Annunciation, Life—to paint us the portraits of those who stood by. They

are the men and the women whom he saw and met in any walk on any day in Florence, and who became to him the real population of his Florentine heaven—the Medici and the Pitti, the Tornabuoni and Sassetti, Albizzi and Benci, whom you might watch and even surreptitiously sketch, as they sauntered in the Piazza, or stepped from their palaces to take the cool of a Florentine evening, or went on Sunday or Saint's-day in festal brocade to the church of Sta. Croce or Novella. These were, after all, from first to last, the true inspirers of Ghirlandaio's art.

CHAPTER III

EARLY WORK

AT what year of his life Domenico Ghirlandaio parted company with Baldovinetti and began to do work on his own account we cannot say. Nor can we even say whether what seem to be his earliest works were done independently, or while he still counted himself as of his old master's workshop. At whatever date Domenico went forth, it is probable that he left behind him for a year or two in the same *bottega* his brother David, who was five years younger. There is, I believe, no document to prove this, or that David ever was with Baldovinetti, but it seems probable for these reasons. David in after days evidently counted himself mosaicist first and painter afterwards. Now Baldovinetti was reckoned to be in Florence of that day the chief master of mosaic, in which art, by the way, Domenico also had some training. It is highly probable that Tommaso, who was a friend of Baldovinetti, would have sent all his three sons to that *bottega*.

It is not easy to place Domenico's early work in its true chronological order. His later works are for the most part accurately attested by document, and signed sometimes to the very day of their completion. First in order of time I should be inclined to place a little-known fresco in the church of St. Andrea at Brozzi, a small village some six miles from Florence towards Poggio a Caiano. There is no history or document attached to this fresco, either as to date or artist. But for the latter question it bears its document upon its face. The Virgin,

MADONNA WITH SAINTS

clad in red and blue, sits enthroned in a niche with a shell-shaped hood. Turning her head slightly to her right, she looks down at the Child who stands at full length upon a book which rests upon her right knee. At her right hand is St. Sebastian, and at her left St. George. An open balustrade lets in a view of a mountainous landscape descending to an inland sea, of the kind which to the last seemed very dear to Ghirlandaio, and which, perhaps, is based upon memories of the seascape north of the mouth of the Arno. The composition is very simple and very pleasing, the old, one might almost say the oldest, motive known to art, which cannot very well go wrong, of two figures balancing each other about a central theme. One sees at once in the Madonna the Verrocchio inspiration. One sees it still more in the Child. One sees it in the plastic modelling of the low-toned flesh. But when one turns from the Madonna to the two boy saints at her side one sees only Ghirlandaio himself, though a young Ghirlandaio. For these portraits have not the power and the convincing reality of his later day. On the other hand they, and indeed the whole picture, possess a naïve charm, and a delightful freshness of fancy which of necessity disappear somewhat in his maturer work as the naïveté of a child must indeed disappear before the full-grown knowledge of the man. The two boys, for they are no more, are portraits, perhaps of some companions of the Baldovinetti workshop, possibly even of his two brothers David and Benedetto. Indeed, if we might think this, and put the age of the younger, the St. Sebastian, at, say fourteen or fifteen, and the elder at seventeen or eighteen, this would make the painter twenty or twenty-three, and would give us the year about 1471 or 1472, a very probable date. The St. Sebastian is fully draped, a method of representing him which was soon to become obsolete, and indeed was already rare, for few painters could throw away one of the rare opportunities allowed to them of painting the nude figure in a religious picture. He is to be recognised as St. Sebastian only by the three arrows which pro-

ject above his shoulder, a charming figure advancing daintily with his gloved hand (much and badly repainted) advanced as if to take the fruit which the child offers him. The quaint charm of the little figure makes one disinclined to notice the obvious weakness of the drawing in parts, the eyes, for instance, wrongly set and out of perspective. The St. George, again evidently a portrait, is built in a sturdier mould, and is less attractive as a figure than the St. Sebastian. But the fresco shows that sympathetic understanding of the joy of life which was with the painter to the end. It is interesting to note that precisely the same Madonna motive, the Child standing on the book, with right hand upraised, is found again in Domenico's altar-piece in the sacristy of the Duomo at Lucca.

There is, as we have said, no evidence but that of style to guide us to the place of this fresco in the order of Domenico's work. The fresco was overlooked by the earlier writers. Vasari says 'His first paintings were in Ognissanti, the chapel of the Vespucci, where is a "Dead Christ" and some Saints, and above in the arch a "Misericordia"; in which is the portrait of Amerigo Vespucci, who made the navigation of the Indies: and in the refectory of the same place he made a "Cenacolo" in fresco.' The fresco of the 'Deposition' with the Vespucci family above was whitewashed over in 1616, the chapel having passed to the possession of the Baldovinetti family, and it was lost sight of till the year 1892, when search was made for it in consequence of traces of fresco having been noticed by the architect Pirisini; the Padre Roberto Razzoli then found, by reference to a certain book of *memorie* preserved in the monastery, that one of the altars on the right side of the nave was dedicated to the Trinita,[1] the other to the Pietà.[2] The latter clue was presently followed up, with the result that by 1898 there had been recovered, from under its

[1] The date on the 'Cenacolo' of the Ognissanti is MCCCCLXXX., which at once proves that it was not one of Domenico's earliest works.

[2] See *L'Arte* for 1898.

Alinari — *Ognissanti*

MADONNA WITH VESPUCCI FAMILY

shroud of whitewash, a fresco which, more from the interest of the persons represented, than from its value in Art, since that has by the nature of the case been seriously impaired, must be reckoned one of the most interesting in Florence.

It is in two parts, the lower part, of a rectangular shape, being a 'Descent from the Cross,' the upper part, a semicircular lunette, showing the 'Madonna della Misericordia' spreading her mantle wide over the members of the Vespucci family. It is needless to say that the frescoes have suffered injury, though not more perhaps than if they had since 1616 been exposed to the air. The retouching which they have undergone is not greater than that which has befallen other works in Florence where perhaps the excuse was less. But of course we are not looking on the work as it came from Domenico's own hand. The 'Deposition' or 'Pietà' has in it the evidence of a young man's work. It is hardly a pleasing picture, nor yet one containing the promise of a great coming strength, but full of a redeeming earnestness of effort which makes it an eloquent page in a life history. The young painter has set himself a severe task in his endeavour to represent the body of the Saviour as very much foreshortened. Completely successful that figure can hardly be said to be, at any rate as we see it now, but the necessity for retouching has inevitably had its effect upon the modelling. One sees in this lower part of the work an influence coming in from Andrea del Castagno and from Pollaiuolo. It is, however, to the upper part of the fresco that the chief interest attaches, owing to the presence there, as Vasari assures us, of Amerigo Vespucci who made the navigation of the Indies. The explorer, who was by the chance of fortune to give his name to half a world, was born in Florence in 1451, and was, when the picture was painted, still trying to learn Latin, wherein he failed, and astronomy, wherein he succeeded, from his uncle Giorgio Antonio Vespucci, the friend of Marsilio Ficino. The bright-faced boy whose head only is seen to the left of the Virgin is said to be Amerigo (Plate v.). He is

judged to be about twenty years old—to myself he would seem younger. Domenico was two years older than Amerigo, whom he is likely to have known well. If we accept the age of Amerigo in this picture as twenty, and I think that that is an over-high estimate of his years, it would bring the age of Domenico to twenty-three when he painted this picture, that is to say the year 1472. It can hardly be later than that.

The Madonna is painted on the beautiful and simple model usually adopted for a 'Madonna della Misericordia.' We naturally think at once of many similar renderings, and especially of Piero della Francesca's picture at Borgo, and Bernardo Rossellino's relief at Arezzo. The Madonna (Plate IV.) spreads her cloak wide to cover with her mercy the members of the Vespucci family. In this case they are many, twelve in all, and perhaps there was another on the far left who has perished with the plaster, and therefore to embrace so many the help of two angels is needed to spread wide the hem of her border. Her figure is very simple and sweet, full of the same gentle pure quality which presently we shall see in the San Gimignano 'Santa Fina,'—full of that innocent fresh feeling which must give way in a later day to greater strength. Already the power of portraiture is strong in the young painter. There is not a face here which does not carry with it a sense of character—not one which does not convince us that we are looking at the very people who lived in the home in Florence, and spent their festa days and Sundays on the family vineyards at Peretola, with the boy who was to be so famous hereafter. 'Misericordiâ Domini Terra est Plena,'—The earth is full of the mercy of the Lord, imprinted on the pedestal beneath the virgin's foot—how full of meaning the words read for us, as we think of the half world that was to be added some five-and-twenty years later to that which men of that day thought was known to them in all its fulness! Domenico did not live to hear of the great discovery of the Genoese Columbus, still less of the fame which his own boy-companion of Florence had gained.

Alinari *Ognissanti*

MEMBERS OF VESPUCCI FAMILY

How little did he forecast to himself the priceless value of this record of his in the church of Ognissanti. Stronger work than this was soon to come from his hand, more masterly drawing, more assured and accomplished portraiture, but nothing which, both by reason of its simple sincerity, its touching unconscious pathos, and its accidental but almost unparalleled interest as an historic document, is likely to move us more as we look up at the Madonna spreading far and wide her mantle broad enough with the help of her angels to cover even a new world with the fulness of the Mercy of the Lord.

CHAPTER IV

THE SISTINE LIBRARY AND OTHER WORK

THE year 1475 brings us to the first authenticated date in the work of Domenico, who was then twenty-six years old. Sixtus the Fourth had become Pope in 1471, and had speedily set about repairing in the Vatican Library the disasters produced by his predecessor Callixtus III. In 1475 Platina was appointed director, and it is from his account-books that we are able to establish the fact that Domenico and his brother David were in that year engaged in the decoration of the Sistine Library, also called the Greek Library, though it is noticeable that the payments are not made to Domenico. On November 28 and on December 14, 1475, entries record that David Ghirlandaio received sums of 10 and 5 ducats, and on May 4, 1476 he receives *pro mercede sua eadem die*, one day's pay, one ducat. The decorations are, in their subjects, typical of the Della Rovere Pope and of that Renaissance spirit which had now set its seal on the highest places of the Vatican itself—six figures on the right typical of the 'Christian Theologies' and on the left six of the 'Heathen Philosophies.' To represent the first, we see Ambrose, Augustine, Jerome, Gregory, Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventura; to represent the last, Aristotle, Diogenes, Socrates, Plato, Antisthenes, Cleobulus. These all have scrolls and inscriptions descriptive of their respective teaching. Thus for Augustine we have the motto *nihil beatius est quam semper aliquid legere aut scribere.*

Very little indeed of the actual work was completed by Domenico. The brother David, now a youth of twenty-one, and

never, at his best, the strongest of craftsmen, seems to have carried through the greater part of the work upon Domenico's designs. 'These monotonous figures,' says Ernst Steinmann, 'leave us unmoved. How gladly would we exchange them all for the lost fresco in the Minerva.' That the results were, however, approved in high quarters is evident from the fact that Domenico was, five years later, selected by Sixtus and his advisers to carry out the decorations of the Sistine Chapel, to be dealt with hereafter.

How came it that in this first great commission, in which a young artist must have felt himself put upon his mettle, and on which he must have known so much to depend, he was content, instead of putting all the strength of his own right hand into it, to leave so much to the weaker hand of David? Here in Rome of all places, and in the Palace of the Pope, one would have expected him to have carried out everything with his own hand, or at least as great a proportion of it as he was wont to do in his later commissions. The thing seems to require an explanation. Where is it to be found?

I believe it is to be found in the fact that Domenico's hands were already full, and that he was at that moment committed to other work elsewhere which demanded his presence and his hand. And I am inclined to believe that the Sistine Library commission was undertaken with the understanding that his designs were to be carried through by his brother David. This view, too, is consistent with the fact that David receives payment. It seems to show either that Domenico was absent from Rome at the time or that David was regarded as having the frescoes in hand. For Domenico to have accepted the commission to carry out the work by his own hand, and then to have left it to his brother, would have been fatal to his own reputation, and fatal also to his future prospect of employment in Rome.

I believe that the work which was then tying his hands was the series of frescoes of the 'Life of Sta. Fina' in the Collegiata or Cathedral Chapel of San Gimignano. These frescoes are

placed by various writers much later in his career, even as late as 1487 by some, and between 1484-87 by others. But to say nothing of the extraordinary activity which these dates would require from Domenico, whose hands were then full with great undertakings, it is, on the mere evidence of style, difficult to believe that these charming, but not quite mature works were produced so near to the dates of the fully developed frescoes of the Trinita and Sta. Maria Novella. Let us see, however, apart from the argument from style, what corroboration can be found for so early a date as 1475 for the San Gimignano frescoes.

In the year 1457 the Consiglio del Popolo of the town had decided to build and adorn a chapel to Sta. Fina. But pest and politics interfered, and in 1465 nothing had been done. In that year Onofrio di Pietro, *operaio del Pieve*, received once more orders to see to it. Giuliano da Maiano sent in a plan in July 1466, which was not, however, set in hand till 1468. The chapel designed by Giuliano, with his brother Benedetto as sculptor of the altar-piece, and with Ghirlandaio's frescoes on its walls and roof, became and remains one of the most complete and admirable monuments of Renaissance art in Italy.

Now the sarcophagus or ark which contains the relics of the saint has attached to it the date MCCCCLXXV., which until recently was hidden behind a portion of the altar, and the inscription, in two Latin couplets, contains the words:—

'Miracula quæris
Perlege quæ paries vivaque signa docent.'

We learn, hence, that Benedetto da Maiano had completed his share of the decoration of the chapel in 1475, and he bids us, for the miracles of the saint, turn to the walls of the chapel and to the pictures upon them. Now it is hardly probable that Benedetto would have made this appeal to frescoes on the walls of the chapel—for of course his words cannot be supposed to apply to any frescoes in other portions of the church—if these

same walls were bare: or if we may not say as much as this, we must at least conclude that either the frescoes were in process of execution, or else decided on and commissioned in 1475. Otherwise, supposing that we accept the later dating for these frescoes of 1484-87, we have to believe that for some nine to twelve years the chapel stood with bare walls around the finished altar of Sta. Fina, with the perpetual advice to those who came there, to read upon them the miracles of the saint.

Again, it is in evidence that early in 1475, and probably in 1474 (by a document of January 14), Domenico was doing work in another part of the same church, since a payment of eighty lire is recorded to Domenico and to Piero da Firenze for the painting in the vault of the nave. There is no record known, at present, of any payments for the frescoes of Sta. Fina chapel, nor, I believe, of any to Benedetto da Maiano for his altar-piece.

On the other side of the argument two facts may be stated—first, that the chapel was not dedicated till 1488; secondly, that in 1477 there is an entry of forty-nine lire paid—no artist's name is given—for blue and gold. With regard to the first fact, I would point out that dedication often followed long after completion, and also that actual completion of certain portions wherein a master's hand was not needed—such as the blue and gold starring of portions of the vault—might easily hang about long after the important works were finished. With regard to the payment for blue and gold, the explanation just suggested may suffice for this also, the entry by no means implying that it was for blue and gold used by Ghirlandaio himself.

We may, I think, safely conclude that the frescoes of the life of the saint were in hand in the year 1475, and we may find here the reason why Domenico was compelled to leave so much of the work in the Sistine Library in the hands of his brother David.

The frescoes are upon the two side walls, to left and right, the end wall being occupied by the altar with Benedetto's sculptural *dossale*. The vaulting of the roof also and the

spandrils contain 'Prophets' and 'Evangelists.' The whole chapel was grievously restored in the year 1832, when heavy repainting took place, to the sore injury of much of the work. Vasari tells us that these frescoes were carried out by Domenico 'in company with' Bastiano Mainardi of San Gimignano, who was indeed the most able of Domenico's assistants, and worked with him up to the end of the master's life. Mainardi had already painted not a few pictures which remain in and about San Gimignano. It seems highly probable that the connection between Domenico and Mainardi began at about the very time of Domenico's first employment in the Collegiata, he having found, as one may suppose, in Mainardi, a competent helper already on the spot. At a much later period the union was to be closer, for not long before Domenico's death Mainardi married Alessandra, the master's half-sister. Vasari's statement that Mainardi was Ghirlandaio's helper in these frescoes is of much interest, because it seems to imply that David had no share in them, and at once suggests that David was occupied in Rome, and that Domenico, having two commissions on his hands, sought fresh aid from outside.

The two frescoes represent the 'Death' and 'Burial of Sta. Fina.' In the first of these (Plate VI.) the interior of a room is painted, through the open door and window of which a glimpse of landscape is given to us. The room itself is bare of furniture, save one long wooden table, and the chair on which the younger of the nurses sits,—this bareness indicating the simplicity of the life of the girl who, through her short span of suffering, yet devoted all she had both of substance and of strength to the help of the poor and the sick. The saint lies in the foreground of the picture, stretched across it upon the wooden planking that had served her for her bed, while two nurses sit, one at her head, the other at her side. The girl has slightly raised her head, her fair hair seeming to rest upon the knee of the older nurse (whose

Ghirlandaio — San Gimignano

VISION OF SANTA FINA

name is preserved to us as Beldia), while she joins her hands in ecstasy at the vision which she sees of St. Gregory surrounded by cherubs, who has appeared to tell her death and coming blessedness. One of the nurses raises her hand as if she too was conscious of the vision, but Beldia sits with absent air, as if she saw it not. The tale is told with great simplicity of expression and great economy of means. Domenico has reserved his love of rich effect and gorgeous circumstance entirely for the pilasters and frieze at the sides and top, which are in reality the framework of the picture and external to it. One brass embossed plate resting on the table is the sole indication that Sta. Fina was able to be, had she set store by it, still rich in this world's goods. The story of a home made poor for the sake of others is finely told through the rich architectural setting, contrasted with the bare interior. There is something in the spirit in which the scene is conceived that reminds one, claiming for it no further resemblance, of Carpaccio's telling of the tale of St. Ursula's chamber.

When we turn from the motive of the fresco to its technique, we find much to notice, though some of the evidence has been obscured by restoration. The saint, a girlish and sweet figure, has been much repainted, the angular folds, intended to express the attenuated form beneath, being thereby over-emphasised and made unduly rigid and even impossible. But at no time could the drawing of this figure have been other than somewhat weak and immature. The drawing also of the younger nurse, holding up her hand, seems to point to young work. On the other hand, the architectural decoration and perspective are admirable,—and if it is safe to argue from work so heavily restored, one may claim for it an observation of the relative values of light entering the chamber from outside, and of the subdued inner light of the room itself. This endeavour to paint light and air as they affect objects seen in a room and in the open air outside was not as yet one of the well-defined aims of the Florentine painters, and to

Ghirlandaio must be given the praise of having herein helped to lead the way. Vasari, who does not seem to have seen the St. Gimignano frescoes, especially speaks of the square window with its light coming through into the room in the 'Birth of the Virgin,' of the Sta. Maria Novella series. The 'Death of Santa Fina' is a forerunner of this effect.

It is interesting, too, to trace the simple and primitive composition of this picture. The young painter, intent on the problem of bringing the arched space with which he had to deal into manageable shapes, has constructed an oblong chamber, whose perspective gives a series of parallel horizontal lines many times repeated from the top to the bottom throughout the fresco. Even the figure of the saint stretched upon the plank-bed gives once more a nearly horizontal line. If the figures of the nurses and of St. Gregory be removed mentally, this repetition of parallel lines becomes unbearable. Domenico therefore creates a diagonal line, to break up this horizontality, from the mitre of St. Gregory down along the heads of the two nurses, while another diagonal is made by the line of the hands of the three women and Sta. Fina's head. The device is of the simplest and most ordinary, such as any young painter might use, and it makes an interesting contrast with the elaborate and often masterly composition of the works of his fuller power, and even of the fresco which stands opposite in the same chapel, namely, the 'Burial of the Saint.' But before we go across to that picture, we must briefly notice the fresco above of the soul of the saint transported to heaven by two supporting angels. A half-length figure of the saint in profile, with hands joined in prayer, is seen in a circle composed of concentric coloured bands, through which rays of glory break in all directions from the figure. Two flying angels support this circle, one on either side. The work seems to be almost wholly that of Mainardi.

In the fresco of the 'Burial of Sta. Fina' (Plate VII.) on

Alinari *San Gimignano*

FUNERAL OF SANTA FINA

the opposite wall, Domenico shows a great advance of strength, not only in drawing and in handling, but also in composition. Here we find him no longer employing a timid and trite device to lead away the eye from the straight lines of his design, but possessed of a scheme of composition in which, by means of masterly architectural drawing, curves and circles are made to counterbalance the curves of the arch, and with the assistance of radiating lines leading the eye to a central point of interest, greatly to diminish the over-formality of the foreground horizontals. The two lines of figures at the head and foot of the bier carry the eye back to the cross upon the altar, which is just above the head of the nurse Beldia, who was at this moment, as the legend says, healed of a lifelong illness, by the miracle of the dead saint laying her hand upon her nurse. The cross and banner, with the candles of the acolytes, bent slightly forward, are valuable for breaking the otherwise too formal uprights of the pilasters. The towers of San Gimignano seen on either side, apart from their great interest, play a most important part in the composition, by breaking the curve of the arch which frames the picture. If the experiment is tried of removing the tallest tower, it will at once be seen how much the composition loses.

Before passing on to other work, we must not forget to examine the groups of which the picture is mainly composed. Here we see Ghirlandaio at once on his own ground. He is here in his strength of portraiture, if not yet at his fullest strength. There is no face out of all the twenty-six, except the saint, and perhaps the old nurse Beldia, which is not distinctly a portrait unidealised. No record is preserved which might enable us to identify the likenesses, but it is impossible to look at the group of three men to the right—probably leading burghers of the town, or still more, at the group of younger men on the left, without seeing that Domenico in this fresco shows us where his heart and his strength lay. We shall have to return to this subject several times later; for the present it may be enough to

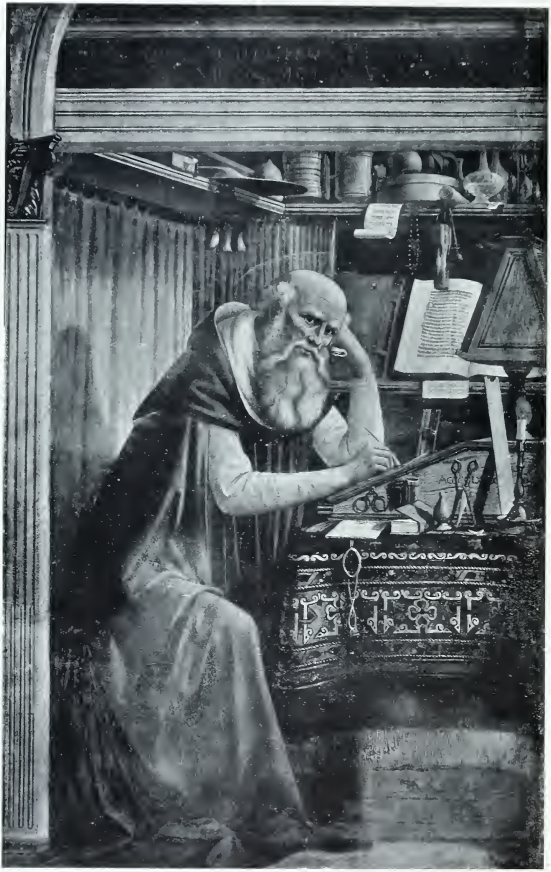
say this, that wherever throughout his whole career Domenico deals with portrait, and with the visible life and its surroundings of his day, he is to be seen in his strength; wherever he is called upon to create a type, to see a vision of the invisible, to realise an ideal, he is to be seen at his weakest.

The 'Apostles' and 'Prophets' in the spandrils and vaulting have been so heavily, and in some cases so entirely, repainted as to make it unsafe, even if it were worth the space required, to analyse them at any length. As we see them now, they are in all respects weaker and less impressive than the work in the 'Funeral of the Saint.' Probably Mainardi did very much of the original frescoes, and perhaps also other assistants not named by Vasari, but with here and there work from the master himself, as perhaps in the head of the 'St. Matthew.' The 'St. Mark' is almost wholly repainted, and the dress of 'St. Luke.' The 'Prophets' in the spandrils are also seriously painted over.

The next dated works are found in 1480, though before that time probably the lost frescoes of Passignano were executed, which deserve mention only because they gave opportunity to Vasari for one of the gossipy stories which he tells so charmingly. David and Bastiano Mainardi, sent on in advance to make preparations for Domenico's work, found scant fare at the monastery, and made complaint that it was not seemly to treat them like labourers. The abbot made promise of better things, but without performance, so that after Domenico's arrival David, who stands in the story as the champion of his brother—whose indifference to all such domestic interests was one of his characteristics—when the miserable *minestra* and bread is brought one evening, arises in wrath, upsets the soup over the *frate*, and belabours him with one of the long club-like loaves of bread, till the abbot comes to the rescue, and is in turn attacked by the infuriated David, who bids him get him gone, since the talent of Domenico is worth more than all such pigs of abbots as ever were in that monastery. The abbot is so impressed by David's proceedings that in future,

Alinari *Sir. Cunningham*

HEAD OF SANTA FINA



Alinari *Ognissanti*

ST. JEROME

says Vasari, he treated them like men of worth, as they were. We are perhaps on the evidence of this behaviour justified in placing the operations at Passignano somewhat early in the careers of the three young men.

In 1480 Domenico was at work in the church and convent of the Ognissanti at Florence, where he had already painted the Vespucci fresco. This time three works resulted from his labour —a 'St. George' in the church, now lost sight of; a 'St. Jerome' in the church, which is still to be seen opposite to the 'St. Augustine' of Botticelli; and the more important 'Cenacolo' in the Refectory. The 'St. Jerome' (Plate IX.) is an upright fresco, containing the single figure of the saint seated, his head upon his hand, at his study-table. In spite of much repainting, there are certain visible qualities which are due to no restorer. First of all, we have to notice that the type of the old grey-bearded saint is dull and commonplace — the aged saint of convention, in whose personality Domenico was not deeply interested, and so, of necessity, fails to interest us. He is one of that class of creations which recur so monotonously in Italian painting in all the schools, where we can recognise the saint only by looking for his attribute, and where there is no sense of individuality, much less of spirituality, to move us or engage us. Botticelli's 'St. Augustine' on the pier opposite, though not of his best, certainly goes deeper beneath the surface of things in this respect. But when we turn to the detail of Domenico's fresco we find ourselves in presence of a picture wrought in this material with all the care, precision, and finish of a minute work in oil. Indeed, we are set thinking of a picture by a very different master in a very different country and age—of the 'George Gisze,' now at Berlin, which Hans Holbein fifty-two years later was to paint in England. The detail in the two pictures is curiously similar, and that of Ghirlandaio in the difficult material of fresco, quite unsuited to minute finish, hardly gives place to that of the mighty German in a material where altering, caressing, revising, and

retouching from day to day are possible. One cannot resist the conviction, remembering what has already been said about Domenico's life-long rejection of oil medium in favour of the older methods, that he had here deliberately set himself to show that his material was capable of a kind of result such as was believed to be possible to the oil painter alone. Domenico's early work is at all times careful and full of well-observed and well-realised detail. He rose to his larger capacity and breadth of treatment by the same process of growth which has had to be followed by every one who has reached great heights in free and masterly handling—namely, by infinite care and patience and completeness in his early work. But nowhere has he shown this almost Flemish dwelling on the minutiæ of detail, this touch-for-touch presentation of natural objects—bottles, boxes, books, inkhorns, scissors, even to the spectacles of the saint, almost as if they had come out of some jewel-like panel by Memling or Van Eyck. It seems, indeed, to be of the nature of a challenge to that very Flemish influence which had now for some years taken so great a hold on Florentine painters. No doubt the picture was finished by Domenico very much *al secco*—that is to say, after the wet plaster on which the colour is applied *al fresco* has dried. But the restorer has confused the issue by mixing his own touches with those of the original painter.

If we pass from the church to the refectory, we find ourselves in presence of the great 'Cenacolo,' or Last Supper (Plate x.), which Domenico painted in the same year as the 'St. Jerome,' 1480. It is monotonous, but unavoidable, to have to repeat so often that 'restoration' (a quite false description of the process of covering up old injured work by another man's paint) has robbed us of evidence on which to ground opinion. It is not more the case with Ghirlandaio's work than with that of any other painter. Indeed, upon the whole, owing to the simplicity and soundness of his methods, his frescoes have stood the test of time better than many or most. But deplorable as is the necessity, if such

Alinari *Ognissanti*

THE LAST SUPPER, 1480

it be, of 'restoration,' it never takes so deplorable, so senseless a form as when a covering of oil paint is placed over the space where once a great master had wrought in tempera and we are asked to accept that as the equivalent of what the master gave.[1] In this case there have been repaintings at several periods—one in which the work was carried out *al fresco*, several portions being bodily cut out and replaced by work on fresh *intonaco*, as the whole head of the Christ—and latest of all much work in oil or other viscous fluid, which has thrown the whole into false relation, emphasising where emphasis injures, and hardening and solidifying the forms of other portions till they start unduly from their places. Nearly all the lower draperies below the table have thus become, in colour, about the most emphatic portion of the picture, and detachment and isolation have been given to the figures of the apostles, with the result—unfair to Ghirlandaio—that the picture seems to lack unity. But this fault is not, it must be admitted, wholly brought about by the restorer.

The subject is one which, coming down from the days of early sculpture in Italy before the revival by Niccolò Pisano, and through Giotto onwards to Andrea del Castagno, and thence to Ghirlandaio, had, as all sacred subjects were wont to do, followed a certain traditional treatment which the portrayal of twelve or thirteen figures, according to whether Judas was admitted or excluded, had rendered convenient. The subject was one in which many a painter was called upon to try his art to the utmost, and in which few could satisfy us—probably few could satisfy themselves. The subject was indeed to wait for adequate or satisfying expression till Lionardo, nearly twenty years later than Domenico, gave to the men of his day what seems to have satisfied their yearning for a more spiritual conception of the scene, though we in our time must be content with the faintly-seen ghost of his

[1] Wiser by far, surely, to leave the wrecked fragments visible, doing all we can reverently to fix even the smallest flake upon the wall, rather than obliterate it by a mask of falseness. Since loss cannot be avoided, loss by age and fading is no greater loss than loss by hiding.

creation and the echo of their praise. For Ghirlandaio, however, with his temperament, the subject presented in respect of spiritual conception peculiar difficulties which he met by not encountering them. Giotto, perhaps the most truly to be called 'religious' of any of the early painters of Italy, gives us the scene in a form in which we think little of the personalities, and less of the characters —save of the one central figure—of those who sit at meat. With Giotto, we feel the fact presented almost as by symbol, so little does he insist on individual portrait, rather than through a collection of twelve well-defined and carefully-sought personalities. No one, I take it, can carry in his head the characteristics of any one of Giotto's disciples from this scene, nor does Giotto ask us to do so. The aim of the painter is sensibly another. With Ghirlandaio the aim is as clearly to produce twelve individuals, to be distinguished in personality and temperament, if he can accomplish it, sitting as they might have sat along the table which the artistic needs of the case seemed to prescribe. But the task, so far as a spiritual conception of the scene was concerned, had failure written on it for Ghirlandaio before he began it. Twelve portraits of twelve men approximating in character to that of the twelve disciples, so far as we are able imperfectly to gauge them, chosen from the streets of Florence, from a Saint John to a Judas,—this, if he had dared it, he might have done. But he might not dare it in such a scene. It was not, as in the Sistine, Trinita, and Novella frescoes, a case of introducing twelve living spectators before whom the action of some great religious fact is supposed to take place, but rather it would have been the introducing of twelve portraits of living Florentines in the character of the twelve disciples —a thing which he himself never does, and which the beholders of his day would not have tolerated. And this distinction is very necessary for us to remember when we look at any single one amongst all Ghirlandaio's works. The onlookers, the accessory spectators—what may be called without irreverence the supernumeraries, the chorus, as it were, in the Greek-tragedy sense of

chorus—are portraits as clear and recognisable as Ghirlandaio can make them. The main actors are always types, ideals—as ideal as Ghirlandaio can make them, and that is not always a very satisfying ideal. And in this scene of the Last Supper Ghirlandaio, from the nature of the case, is called upon to create ideals of twelve men in whom the spectator asks from the painter for a spiritual conception of each, answering nearly to his own spiritual conception, and yet carried out with so much appeal to the reality of living men around as to seem possible and real. For the age of presentation by anything approaching to symbol or symbolic convention has passed away. Ghirlandaio is to build up ideals, not wholly without the aid of portraiture, to be sure, yet with so little reference to recognisable portraiture that no one can point his finger at any one of them and say—This is Giovanni So-and-so, or Piero di So-and-so; you may see him to-morrow in the Piazza, or at Or San Michele, or in Santa Maria del Fiore. There are evidently types founded upon portrait, especially in the three youngest of the group, but in the main the sense of portrait is obliterated in conventional type, as presently again at San Marco. Of the head of the central figure, which should be our chief interest, we are unable to speak with profit, since at a later date it was, as we have said, cut out and replaced, evidently by some one who had seen, and seeks to give some echo of, Lionardo's type at Milan.

Lacking then the temperament of a Lionardo, which should enable him to give us a deeply penetrating, or, as we may call it, spiritual interpretation of the characters of these twelve men who sat at meat, Ghirlandaio seeks to help out his vision of the scene by the action and movement of the twelve actors in it. Here a predecessor, Andrea del Castagno, had on the walls of the refectory of Sant' Apollonia already led the way in strong and energetic—perhaps one may say, without injury to Castagno's great powers, slightly brutal—rendering of the subject.

Ghirlandaio tries to avoid the excess of energy, which should

disturb the solemn unity of the scene, while he gives enough movement and action to create an interest in the identity of each individual. In the case of Judas, seated apart on this side of the table—an earlier convention—with his almost insolent attitude and vulgar type, he shows his identity by his position, but does not move us by his personality. St. Peter displays the energy of his nature by the action of his right hand, clasping his table knife, which he seems to thump down upon the table with a fierce glance towards Judas. The St. John, too, leaning on the Master's bosom, is easy to recognise. To each of the others some special action is given which does not need separate analysis. The combined action of the whole, however, fails to produce a sense of unity, but rather gives a sense of detached and isolated movements. The interest is not concentrated around the central figure, and the result is a somewhat restless feeling in the composition.

Apart from these considerations the fresco, as mere fresco, has been very fine. It is handled with breadth and freedom in the true spirit of the medium. The details, as, for example, the plates and glasses and foods upon the table, are expressed with as much exactness and reality as in the adjoining 'St. Jerome' in the church, yet by much broader and more summary means. It is, by the way, interesting to notice that for the tablecloth, magnificently painted, Ghirlandaio has given us one of those beautiful patterns in rough blue woollen thread on coarse towelling which were in common use in his day, and of which many museums and private collections in Europe are still able to show us examples.[1] The architectural drawing and perspective are beyond reproach, and Ghirlandaio's strong decorative sense is nowhere better seen. The open space of sky seen above the low wall of the room, between

[1] The author has in his collection a specimen which is almost identical with the Ognissanti tablecloth. The motive of all these designs is very similar—two birds, gryphons, lions, or the like, on either side of a tree of life or fountain—founded upon one of the oldest motives known to Art. The neighbourhood of Perugia was the chief centre for these productions, of which good pieces may be seen in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Alinari S. Marco

THE LAST SUPPER

the two arches by which the picture is divided, is broken up by finely painted and most decorative foliage of orange, lemon, cypress, and palm, above which birds fly across the sky. And I would here, as a matter of minor interest, point out one incident which Ghirlandaio uses so often as to show that he clearly had some special interest in it—probably as a lover of hawking—I mean the incident twice repeated here, and occurring again in San Marco, the Sistine, Sta. Maria Novella, and elsewhere, of a hawk in the act of striking down a wild duck or other bird. I have in an earlier chapter pointed out that his master, Baldovinetti, shows the same love of animal and bird life, and also the same partiality for bold foliage thrown decoratively against a sky, as his more able pupil.

Although the 'Cenacolo' which Domenico painted in the refectory of San Marco (Plate XI.) belongs to a later date, it is convenient to touch upon it in this place. The general scheme, as well as the special detail, of the San Marco fresco is very similar to that of the Ognissanti, modified only to meet some slight differences in the spring of the vaulting of the room. But this time Domenico, possibly himself dissatisfied with the result of his Ognissanti grouping, has abandoned the attempt to give strong individual movement to each figure. At San Marco, therefore, each disciple sits in a quiet upright attitude, yet once again so far detached from unity with the central figure—in several cases the disciples are represented as looking right out of the picture—that though the composition is perhaps more restful, it still fails in what should have been the first and most absorbing motive of the scene. The fresco, always low in tone, has darkened with age, and has become sombre—an effect which is perhaps somewhat emphasised to the eye of the spectator by its near neighbourhood to the frescoes of Fra Angelico in the same monastery. This tendency to sombre tone in fresco increased upon Ghirlandaio with advancing years. The work at San Marco, however, can never have been technically the equal of the Ognissanti 'Cenacolo.'

It bears evidence in parts of help from a weaker hand, we know not whose, and we realise that either Domenico tired in repeating what was more or less a replica of a subject not wholly suited to his temperament, or that, fully occupied with other commissions, he left much of it in the hands of his scholars and helpers.

CHAPTER V

THE SECOND ROMAN VISIT—THE SISTINE CHAPEL

WHEN in the year 1471 Francesco della Rovere of Savona became Pope under the title of Sixtus IV., he lost little time before he set about the great schemes which were to unite the names of himself and of his nephews, Giuliano della Rovere (Julius II.) and the Riarii, with the brightest period of Renaissance Art in Rome. We have already seen how Domenico and David Ghirlandaio had found employment in the Sistine Library, where Melozzo da Forlì had also been at work. Meanwhile Sixtus IV. had bestowed his name on a building destined to be famous to every corner of the civilised world—the Sixtine or Sistine Chapel, which, perhaps begun in 1471 in the Pope's first year by Giovanni dei Dolci, a Florentine, was finished in 1481 and ready to receive its decorations. In the autumn of that year, Sixtus summoned to Rome a little band of chosen painters, of whom Sandro Botticelli appears to have been treated as the leader and overseer. The others were Pinturicchio, Perugino, Piero di Cosimo, Cosimo Rosselli, Luca Signorelli (with Bartolommeo della Gatta), to whom, with Botticelli, were assigned the six frescoes of the left wall, while the right wall was handed to the same artists and to Domenico Ghirlandaio, who also was commissioned to do the two frescoes on the entrance wall, now painted over by later artists. Botticelli and Ghirlandaio, with assistants, and perhaps Cosimo Rosselli, painted the series of Popes above the great range of frescoes. The contract was signed on October 17, 1481, and provided for the completion of the work within six

months—before March 15, 1482—a condition which was duly observed, and the work was immediately commenced.

It is to be noticed that the majority of these painters were Florentines.[1] Hardly a year had passed since Sixtus had removed the ban under which they, in common with all the citizens of Florence, had lain in penalty for the contumacious hanging of the Archbishop of Pisa after the conspiracy of the Pazzi. But in November of 1480 Sixtus, not perhaps wholly without thought of his great schemes and the need of Florentine assistance, had solemnly, in front of the great gates of St. Peter's, removed the interdict. The Pazzi trouble was to be forgotten now by the Pope, not perhaps so entirely by the Florentines. Sixtus was absorbed in his great schemes for the remodelling of Rome, and the year 1481 was perhaps the period of his most feverish activity. As the little band of Florentine painters and assistants made their way home at night across the Ponte Sant' Angelo by the Via Papalis, which led through the quarter of the Campus Martius, towards their lodgings in the Florentine colony that gathered around the church of the Minerva, they would see on every side of them the signs of this activity. The Hospital of Santo Spirito rose on their right hand, newly rebuilt, close to the bridge itself, from which the armourers' stalls and bothies, which had gathered on it like the shops on the Ponte Vecchio, had just been swept away. Across the bridge, in the Via Papalis, houses had been pulled down, and streets both here and elsewhere were being widened. The masons lately set free from the building of the Ponte Sisto were everywhere engaged in paving streets which had been hitherto mere mud channels. Cardinal D'Estouteville, the Pope's chief ædile, was busy everywhere on behalf of his master and Rome, and other cardinals were busy for themselves building palaces for their lifetime, or marble tombs against their death. The time and the circumstances were such as to inspire artists even of less

[1] It may be added that Mino da Fiesole was employed as sculptor in the chapel, with Giovanni Dalmata as assistant.

calibre than those who had met together in Rome at the great Pope's command. They proved worthy of their opportunity, and if Julius II. had never become Pope, and Michelangelo had never frescoed the Sistine ceiling, yet the chapel would be to us an object of pilgrimage as the chief treasure-house of Italian Renaissance painting.

It is strong praise, therefore, to be able to say that Ghirlandaio's fresco takes a high place amongst these great examples of the greatest masters of his day. By some even the highest place has been awarded to him amongst that chosen company. We need, indeed, not discuss that question. It is enough here to say that the more Ghirlandaio's work in the Sistine Chapel is studied, the more likely shall we be to accept the highest estimate of his art. But it is not work which yields up its secret to the careless, casual spectator. Of superficial brilliancy there is none. Of the attraction which results from forcible effects, captivating colour, striking incident—all the features, indeed, which fascinate at the first glance, there is an almost entire absence. It is grave, solemn work—I speak now especially of the one surviving subject-fresco of the 'Calling of the First Disciples'—worthy of its place and of its author. And if any one desires to do it justice, and will give to it the time which it requires—I have observed that the average time which the visitor gives to the ceiling and 'Last Judgment,' throwing in the twelve great frescoes of the Sistine, is less than three-quarters of an hour—he will find that it possesses qualities which remain impressed upon the mind long after the emotions excited by more immediately attractive work have passed away. The fresco has never been the most popular among the twelve frescoes in the Sistine; still less has it been the most popular among Ghirlandaio's own productions. But nowhere has he more fully established his claim to a first place among the painters of his day, nowhere has he put his strength into his work with a more masterly result. Less attractive to the eye than the fascinating series of Santa Maria Novella, and, by the very nature of it, less

full of the delightful Florentine flavour which belongs to the later work in his native town, this fresco in the papal chapel of Rome, one of a great group of religious paintings in which each artist was to give of his best and most individual art, while at the same time he was to work in harmony with his fellows and suppress much of his own preference for the sake of loyal artistic unity—this demanded and produced several qualities in Ghirlandaio's work which were not called for in the Florentine series.

Only one of Domenico's great subject-frescoes now survives in the Sistine in addition to portraits of Popes which, from the hand of Botticelli, Cosimo Rosselli,[1] and our own painter, fill the spaces above the twelve great frescoes and below the point where Michelangelo's work commences. Ghirlandaio's fresco, the 'Calling of the First Disciples' (Plate XII.), is the third from the altar on the right wall. The main motive is thrice repeated. In the central foreground stands the Saviour, before whom kneel the disciples Peter and Andrew, who have first answered the call. In the middle distance to left and right, separated by the waters of the lake, the scene of the call is again given to us. On the left side the Saviour stands on the shore, while Peter and Andrew, the latter grasping his net, are seen preparing to go ashore; and on the right-hand side again, the Saviour stands on the shore and waits for a small boat in which sit James and John, while their father, Zebedee, backs them in from the lake. In this group behind the Saviour stand Peter and Andrew. In all cases the chief actors, namely, the Saviour and the four apostles, are distinguished by haloes (Zebedee has none). The faces of these, moreover, may at once be seen to be ideal types and not individual portraits; and there are two more figures, grey-bearded men, in the foreground, without haloes, of whom the same may be said. But of the remaining faces, some fifty-three in number, each one appears to be a distinct portrait, and in all probability they represent members

[1] That is to say if we accept the Dionysius and Callixtus as the work of Rosselli, an uncertain attribution which cannot here be discussed.

Ghirlandaio — Sistine Chapel

THE CALL OF THE FIRST APOSTLES

of the Florentine colony then living in Rome. These portrait groups fill up on either side the spaces behind the leading groups, ceasing at the middle distance. Behind the central group in the foreground a narrow lake, enclosed by mountains on either side, recedes to the far distance, which is closed in by a faint mountain shape which, unless I am mistaken, is a memory of the beautiful mass which is seen far away in the gap between the Sabine Mountains and the Alban Hills, as it may be viewed any day from the Loggia of the Vatican, as Domenico himself and his brother painters may have gazed at the matchless view from the parapet which runs around this very chapel itself. Along the shores of the lake are seen battlemented towns, villages, churches, and towers. A solemn grey sky, through which the sun tries to burst, lining a dark grey cloud with a silver edging, reflects itself in the water of the lake. Trees with foliage, decoratively handled in Domenico's favourite fashion, break this great sky space on either hand, while a few birds also—amongst them the pursuing hawk and the suffering mallard as before—dart across the sky and serve further to help the composition, without interfering with the sense of space and of atmosphere, which pervade this picture (painted, we shall do well to remember, in 1481), as I think in no other work that had hitherto been seen in Italian art. To this question I must return presently.

As I have said in an early chapter when speaking of the influences which may have helped to shape Domenico in his first youth, there is something in this fresco which from the first sight of it forces us to think of Masaccio, and especially of his 'Tribute Money' in the Carmine. When one endeavours to lay one's hand more definitely on any single point or trait in which the younger master seems to have directly followed the elder, we find that the resemblance can lie only in the largeness, dignity, and breadth with which each master approaches and achieves his theme. The use of classical drapery serves perhaps to add to that first impression. I would here draw attention to a point

which has not hitherto been observed in this Roman fresco of Ghirlandaio's, namely, the necessity which he has seemed to feel himself under of using a classical cast of drapery, so that wherever throughout the fresco a figure is visible at full length (with the one exception of the boy Lorenzo Tornabuoni, whose costume is purely Florentine), Ghirlandaio, even for his Florentine burghers, contrives to arrange their robes and mantles in such a fashion that the whole of the drapery shall follow the classical cast which he has adopted. This may be seen and tested best in the full-length figure in the foreground on the left of a man in a green under-dress, with his right hand outstretched, and the lower part of his body enveloped in a toga-like mantle. So too in the only two figures seen at full length in the right-hand portrait group, the Florentine civil dress is made to assume a classical shape. But the figures which are only seen to the shoulders or breast are allowed to appear in the ordinary pleated tunic of the day. In the Trinita and Novella frescoes complete Florentine dress is frankly adopted for all save the chief actors in the religious incident, and even in some cases for them also. Here in Rome, and at this earlier period in his career, Domenico seems in this particular to have accepted as a necessity a certain reserve which he abandons hereafter.

It is unfortunate that, in the few instances where Domenico in his art has endeavoured to deal with that type, which puts the art of any painter to its highest test, namely, the face of Christ Himself, nothing has come down to us in quite unaltered shape from the master's own hand. The Ognissanti head was, as we have seen, cut out and replaced on fresh *intonaco*. The San Marco head has been retouched; the heads in the 'Baptism,' Sta. Maria Novella choir (upper row right side), though from Domenico's design, are apparently carried out by Mainardi; while the altar-piece, once in the same choir, of the 'Resurrection' (now at Berlin) was also carried out by David and Benedetto. The 'Coronation' picture at Narni has been seriously repainted. And

it is therefore the more to be regretted that the head of the Saviour in this Sistine fresco has not come down to us in unrestored condition. Bearing this fact in mind, however, we can realise Ghirlandaio's type enough to speak to certain characteristics, at least, in it without much danger.

While one readily admits that he has not created for us an ideal which could take a strong hold upon our imagination—his failure herein, however, being that of almost every artist who has ever attempted the almost impossible task—we find in it more of manhood than in the sweet and feminine beauty of Perugino, but far less of sorrowful dignity and depth of feeling, far less of the Divine, than in his great contemporary Lionardo. His type has less of earnestness and strength than that of Piero della Francesca, whose 'Risen Christ' at Borgo is stern and earnest almost to ugliness; less of these qualities than is found in Melozzo da Forlì, with whose work Domenico had been associated. Domenico, as we might have expected from his temperament, sees the manhood of Christ but fails in his insight into the deeper side of his subject. As we have already said, that failure is with them all a matter of degree. No master, unless it be perhaps Lionardo as we read him in his drawing of the Saviour's head for the great 'Cenacolo' at Milan, has ever come anywhere near a type that satisfies us. But Domenico, from the rarity of his attempts, would seem to have been conscious of his inability to satisfy himself. He avoids the necessity of failure, wherever choice is left him. Here at the Sistine, and again at Ognissanti and San Marco, no choice was left him. The Sistine figure of Christ is dignified and manly, and so far impressive; and He is far more real to us than the apostles and the two other grey-bearded figures who complete the tale of Domenico's ideal conceptions in this fresco. These same figures present a very unsatisfying convention, and we turn back from them to contemplate the figure of Christ with the conviction that in this latter Domenico had striven hard to give us that which should be worthy of his subject.

The two apostles in the middle distance, on the right side, behind the Christ, who is summoning the two disciples in the boat, are so much weaker than anything else in the picture as to show, even when repainting has been allowed for, the hand of a scholar.

As we turn from these figures who represent what we must call the religious action of the subject, to the spectators of the scene—the fifty-three portraits of living men and women, that is to say, who, with the slight reserve already indicated as to the classical air thrown over them by Ghirlandaio's ingenious device, are simply men and women as they walked in Florence or in Rome—we become at once conscious that Domenico feels himself freed from a certain restraint, and is at once himself, and in the region of his art where he breathes most freely. So apparent is this, that we are tempted perhaps to give less value to the other element in the fresco than it really deserves. Here as elsewhere, the religious element in the picture is overweighted by the powerful and vivid interest which Ghirlandaio imparts to his portrait groups. Yet nowhere in this painter's art can the religious element so well afford to stand for judgment alone.

And we seem here, standing at about the half-way in the painter's career, to have reached a point at which we must, if we are to do justice to the man, examine this whole question of the introduction by himself and others, though by himself above all others, of these contemporary portraits in pictures which profess to represent the most sacred events of Bible history. The charge has often been brought against Domenico Ghirlandaio that his art is almost wholly lacking in religious feeling, and that by his introduction of gorgeous contemporary costume, (as in the Trinita and Novella series), he introduced a wholly worldly and, as it is sometimes called, a Pagan element into Italian Art, from which it was not destined to escape during the brief century and a half of life which lay before it. The charge that he was responsible for its introduction falls immediately to the ground in face of the fact that from the days of Giotto onwards it had been used

in more or less degree by every considerable master. The question of the intrinsic rightness or wrongness, reverence or irreverence of the method is another matter, and needs careful investigation. It must, however, be at once admitted that though Ghirlandaio must share the charge in company with many another, yet inasmuch as he certainly does stand out more conspicuously than any other in the use of the expedient, there is no great injustice in selecting him as defendant.

The question cannot be properly understood without reference to the history and growth of the practice as it came down from the earlier masters.

From very early days it had been an admitted privilege for the donors of a religious picture, in commissioning an artist to paint altarpiece or fresco, for altar station, chapel, or shrine, to have themselves represented, generally kneeling in all reverence at the foot of the picture; and this is in no spirit of personal vanity (though it may possibly at times have been not without taint of that defect), nor of ostentation, but as a quite humble and religious expression of their whole-hearted consent to the great fact represented, and of their desire to live, so to speak, in its perpetual presence. No one, donor, artist, or spectator, could be so foolish as to ask any one to pretend to believe that they, the said donors or artists, imagined that the scene was so enacted and in presence of such witnesses. That of course goes without saying. Further than this, a painter took to himself the privilege of adding to his scene, whether of the Crucifixion, the Nativity, the Descent from the Cross, or the events from the life of a St. Dominic or a St. Francis, such personages as, through their interest or character, he thought worthy to be represented as present at such a scene. No doubt from the first the interest which the painter felt in the personality of these spectators had much to say in their introduction, and it was inevitable that we should presently find amongst them not a few, of whom, if we were to constitute ourselves judges

of morals, rather than of art, we might think that their life history hardly justified their presence. But they are presented to us there in no spirit of irreverence. When we find a Vespucci kneeling at the foot of the 'Madonna della Misericordia,' a Medici before the 'Madonna of the Adoration,' or a Malatesta before 'St. Sigismond,' we have before us, whatever we may think of the men who kneel there, not a piece of arrogant vanity, nor yet a piece of hypocritical parade, but a visible confession made perpetual before the eyes of all the world of their faith in Madonna or Saint. When Giotto gathers around the deathbed of St. Francis, or Fra Angelico around the cross of the Saviour, groups of frati who walked the cloisters of Sta. Croce or San Marco in the days of these two painters, we know that both on the part of the painter and of the painted the intention was wholly reverent, because we are persuaded of the character of both. When we find in the frescoes of Masaccio portraits of his contemporary Florentines, citizens now, not friars, though we know them not, we cannot suddenly refuse to him the concession which we have just made to Giotto and Angelico. It is only one step further to Filippo Lippi and Cosimo Rosselli, to Piero della Francesca, and Botticelli. These all were recipients of a tradition which they merely enlarged so that their pictures more and more became records of the mien and bearing of the men of their day. And there is no point at which it is possible to step in and say 'the tradition which began in reverence has now become irreverent; the religious meaning, which was once attached to the presence of these living men and women as a kind of visible confession of faith, stops at this point, and henceforth becomes a puppet-show with a pretence of a religious motive thrown in.' That is a view which is unjust both to the painters and to those who desired their portraits to appear, and it loses sight of the continuity of a tradition which alone explains the tolerance and acceptance of such a series as that of Sta. Maria Novella, or the fresco of the Sistine. The traditional religious

meaning of this gathering of contemporaries, as witnesses of a religious fact, was never lost, though it undoubtedly underwent such dangerous enlargement and expansion that the interest in the personalities of the living men, the pleasure to be derived from their brocades and braveries, became primary rather than secondary. And where, as with Ghirlandaio, the power of the painter lay chiefly in the portrayal of these very features of the beauty and interest of life, while his power of realising the spiritual was of a secondary order, it was inevitable that the former should become the preponderating interest of his picture. But even when this disproportion of interests was carried to its extreme, as it may be said to have been in the later case of the Novella series, the theory remains the same, namely, the gathering of earthly witnesses around a sacred fact in which they express their faith by their visible presence. What share vanity, ostentation, mere worldly delight in looking handsome in a crimson berretta or a flowered gown may have had in making their painted presence also flattering to the personages themselves is a question which, however one may incline to answer it, does not destroy the original purpose.

It is not easy to see what line Domenico laid down for himself as a reserve upon this principle. To say that he never lets the principal sacred actors of his scene appear in the garb and under the portrait of contemporary men and women, is stating too definitely what nevertheless seems to have been his general rule. The exceptions, or apparent exceptions, are sufficiently numerous to invalidate the statement. The Saviour is at all times an ideal type, and so too the Virgin apparently, unless the beautiful Madonna of the 'Adoration of the Shepherds' in the Accademia at Florence (No. 195) be an exception. The disciples and apostles, too, may be seen in most cases to be types rather than direct portraits built up out of living men, but not referable, except in one or two cases perhaps, to any single living man. His saints, other than Biblical saints however, are often—as in

the picture of the 'Enthroned Madonna' of the Academy—evidently studied portraits. The kings and shepherds again in his 'Adoration' pictures afford him an opportunity of strongly individual portrait. It will be remembered that Botticelli treats them in like fashion. In the Novella series, the last great works of Ghirlandaio's life, we find the Saviour and the Baptist reserved uncompromisingly as ideals. The Virgin, whenever she is represented as grown up, also seems to be so. On the other hand, the St. Elizabeth of the 'Visitation' and the St. Anne seem to be portraits, or at any rate memories of some living face. I have thought that one of them is perhaps the painter's mother. There is, too, in the British Museum, a careful study of apparently early date, by Domenico, of the head of an elderly woman, which may have served as the model, slightly modified, of several of the women in that series.

It will be seen, however, that in the absence of evidence, our means of identification being confined to a very small proportion of all the portraits that Ghirlandaio has left us, it is not possible to define at all clearly the limits which the painter imposed upon himself. This has seemed the proper point at which to turn aside for a moment to suggest the one or two points which have seemed to be worth our considering, but the difficulty does not occur in discriminating between portrait and ideal in this Sistine fresco where the distinction is almost everywhere clear to the eye.

The portraits, as we have said, are over fifty in number, and it is probable that all, or the greater number, represent members of the Florentine colony then living in Rome, for the most part in the neighbourhood of the Pantheon and of Sta. Maria Sopra Minerva. In these, too, are probably included the portraits of several of the leading Florentines who, the year before, had formed part of the embassy of twelve, who came to receive the pardon of the Pope on behalf of their Republic. Unhappily, it is possible to identify with certainty only a very small number, no key having come down to us, a matter the more to be re-

gretted, as there can be little doubt that the groups include names of great interest in the history of the time. Beginning at the right hand end of the lower row, the man with long hair and round cap, whose head and shoulders only are seen, is not identified, but the second, the shrewd-faced man with the scarlet mantle and cap, whose parti-coloured scarf or turban droops over his shoulders, is thought to be Guidantonio Vespucci, the uncle of the navigator, who had been one of the Embassy the year before. The fifth from the right, a greyheaded hale man without a cap, whose whole figure is seen clad in a violet robe, is probably Francesco Soderini, Bishop of Volterra, afterwards Cardinal, who had been chief of the Embassy. Others see in him Rainaldo Orsini, Archbishop of Florence. Next to him a greybearded man with a flat hat, seen only head and shoulders, is with tolerable certainty recognised as the Greek humanist, Johannes Argyropulos, the translator into Italian of Aristotle. He had been invited by Cosimo dei Medici to Florence, where he had spent some fifteen years, receiving from Lorenzo il Magnifico the privileges of Florentine citizenship. Sixtus IV. had summoned him to Rome, where evidently he had continued to rank himself as one of the Florentine community. Next to him the middle-aged clean-shaven man, with the keen grey eye, who wears a hat bound around by a turban-like striped scarf, is recognisable from his portraits and from the medallion by Niccolò Fiorentino, as Giovanni Tornabuoni, whose sister, Lucrezia, had married Piero dei Medici (il Gottoso), and was the mother of Lorenzo il Magnifico. Giovanni was the head of the Medici banking firm in Rome, and treasurer to Sixtus IV. He will presently play a large part in the development of the Art of Ghirlandaio. Living from time to time in Rome, where, in 1477, he lost his wife, Francesca, daughter of Luca Pitti, Lorenzo's enemy, for whom Brunelleschi had built the Pitti Palace, he still regarded Florence as his home, retaining there his palace in the Via Tornabuoni which Michelozzo had built for him.[1] Indeed in

[1] It still remains, but has been restored. It is now the Palazzo Corsi.

the year after this fresco was commenced, he was Gonfaloniere of Florence, returning to Rome only as Ambassador. Just below him stands a boy of some fourteen or fifteen years old in Florentine costume, his right hand on his belt. This is Giovanni's eldest son, Lorenzo Tornabuoni, now motherless, who appears again in one of the Novella frescoes. The boy lived to see sadder days. In 1486 he married Giovanna degli Albizzi, the stately girl in the gold brocade (Plate XXXIV.) of the 'Visitation' in the Novella series.[1] Things were gay and hopeful at that wedding. Botticelli painted for the Villa Lemmi, where the marriage feast was held, those allegorical frescoes, whose remains are now in the Louvre, in which young Lorenzo is surrounded by the Liberal Arts, and Giovanna by the Virtues. 'But,' says the chronicler who describes the wedding, 'it is true that in this life when laughter ends weeping begins, for this lady died in child-birth, and left her old father and her young husband who loved her most dearly.' Eleven years later than his marriage, Lorenzo was to lay his head upon the block in the courtyard of the Bargello, with four other citizens, condemned for a plot to restore the Medici, on evidence which to-day would not suffice to hang a dog.[2] It is probable that the father of Giovanna, Tommaso degli Albizzi, is somewhere amongst the unrecognised portraits of the Sistine Fresco, since he had been one of the embassy, and was very closely allied with Giovanni Tornabuoni. So too, perhaps, Luigi Guicciardini (a man of seventy), and Gino Capponi, may be amongst them. And I am tempted to conjecture that the beautiful young face of the boy, second to the left from Giovanni Tornabuoni, may be that of Francesco (Cecco) Tornabuoni, the nephew of Giovanni, and cousin of Lorenzo il Magnifico, who died in 1482, and for whom Mino da Fiesole made the tomb in

[1] Stated by Vasari to be Ginevra dei Benci, but now identified through the medallion of Niccolò Fiorentino, who also did a medallion of her husband Lorenzo, as Giovanna, daughter of Tommaso degli Albizzi.

[2] For a full account of the supposed plot, and the popular fury in Florence which preceded the death of the five citizens, see Villari's *Life and Times of Savonarola*.

the Minerva, whose lovely sarcophagus, with the figure of the boy upon it, alone remains, cast out from its chapel, and built into the wall to the left of the great entrance. The head of which I speak is one of the finest in the fresco, and is also one of the few which have entirely escaped retouching. The young life seems to have been full of hope and promise. The inscription on the tomb in the Minerva tells of the sorrow which his early death caused to Sixtus the Fourth. Of the other four lads who stand with him in the same row, probably all of them of the family of the Tornabuoni, we know no more than Ghirlandaio's brush can tell us.

It is thought again that the man whose head to the shoulders is seen behind the Saviour, and who wears a Florentine dress, is Diotisalvi Neroni, who died in exile in Florence in 1482, and whose tomb, by a Tuscan sculptor, is on the entrance wall of the Minerva. He had been, with Luca Pitti, one of the bitterest opponents of the Magnifico, but it is claimed for him on his tomb that he had served Florence well and faithfully, that he had loved the liberty of his country, and that, in a word, amid the storms of life he had lived well. He, like young Cecco Tornabuoni, was to find his rest in the Minerva before the paint upon this fresco was well dry. There is in the possession of M. Dreyfus in Paris, a bust of Diotisalvi at an earlier age than this, which, even allowing for the action of years and anxiety, does not greatly encourage the view that the fresco gives us a portrait of the same man. The bust is that of a strong-featured not very refined type of man, of burly presence with short strongly growing hair. This head, we may notice, is again as Ghirlandaio left it.

At some little distance to the left, in the foreground, stands a man of fine presence, richly arrayed, with a dark green tunic, and a cap secured to his head by a scarf. He holds his right hand out from him in an attitude of surprise. The features have a strong Medici type, and he is, I think, quite without doubt, intended for one of that family. I should be inclined to recognise

him as Antonio dei Medici, who had been one of the members of the embassy. It is to be noticed, as bearing on the identification of the previously mentioned portrait as Diotisalvi Neroni, that certainly that face is made to be gazing on this representative of the Medici family with a peculiarly sad expression. Where evidence is scanty, even so faint a clue should be recorded. We have none to help us to the names of the others, many of them striking portraits, who fill up the scene. We would give much to be able to put a name to the very beautiful face of the youth (Plate XIII.) with two jewels in his hat, who is seen high up on the left of the fresco, three from the end—once more a piece of work unspoilt from the hand of the master. He has given us nothing more beautiful, more full of expressive, haunting, fascination. And indeed it may be said that often when we get, in any of Domenico's works, a young face which has wholly escaped the restorer, we find ourselves compelled to do amends to the painter, whom we are apt to accuse, even in his portraits, of too material a presentment, and of painting the mere lineaments rather than the soul. Neither Botticelli nor Filippo Lippi, the painter above all others to whom praise by all men for the very opposite characteristic is given in so generous a measure, ever painted faces fuller of dreamy mysterious beauty than this young unknown Florentine, and the other whom I have suggested as young Cecco Tornabuoni.

For the rest, as our eye passes across the faces of those whose names are unwritten for us, we must be content to know that four hundred years ago they were men and women bright with life and interest, that they walked thus and looked thus in the streets of Rome and Florence—gazed with these eyes, too, on their own portraits on the fresco, as we gaze on them now—that they lived, died, and have left no memorial save this record by the painter, who would have done more kindly for us to have taken into partnership for half an hour some scrivener out of the corner of the piazza.

Alinari *Sistine Chapel*

THE CALL OF THE FIRST APOSTLES

DETAIL OF FRESCO

Before we pass from this, the contemplation of this great landmark in Domenico's career, we must once more for a moment return to the fresco whose importance in the growth of landscape Art of the period can hardly be overrated. As an endeavour to represent mountain scenery under the broad and level light of a grey day it succeeds to a degree unknown to any work which up to that time had been painted. The drawing of the rock form is, of course conventional, even impossible—the day of rock drawing was not yet—and the mountain shapes are again formal, but there is a sense of atmosphere and distance which marks an epoch in the progress of landscape. It was to be many and many a long year before any painter should attempt to grapple with the problems of landscapes lighted and objects seen in full sunlight; nor yet in his paintings of his interiors has he done more than touch some of the more elementary of these problems. But there are indications that if his life had been longer—he was only thirty-one when he painted this fresco—and if immediate success in portrait grouping and architectural detail had not absorbed him in these branches till the day of his death, he might, with advanced years and knowledge, have returned to these problems of lighting and landscape, and carried them further than any master of the Renaissance in Italy succeeded in carrying them.

As we have already said, to Domenico was also assigned the task of adding to the roll of the popes whose idealised portraits surround the chapel in the spaces between the windows. Those which Domenico executed with help[1] are Anacletus, Clemens, Victor, Pius, Iginus, Felix, Eutychianus, and Caius Dalmata. It is inevitable that in presence of the superb series of frescoes below and the more superb ceiling of Michelangelo above, the less engrossing, almost supernumerary works of decoration such as this series of popes, should fall into a place in our interest lower than

[1] The Eutychianus has been almost wholly repainted. The Pius, Dalmata, Iginus show traces of work by another hand, besides having suffered from repainting.

from their value as painting they deserve. But technically they rank high in the work of Ghirlandaio. Perhaps he himself and Botticelli felt that they were fighting a losing cause, trying to make vital to all eyes what no eyes would be eager to gaze upon so long as there remained for them the feast below. That both men put much strength into them becomes evident to any one who will concentrate his interest upon them—but we are dealing here only with Ghirlandaio's share. It was putting Ghirlandaio to a high test to ask him first to form a high mental conception of personalities who were unreal, almost non-existent to him, and then to transfer that conception to a concrete form which should convince and interest. And yet they do convince and interest if we can detach ourselves enough from the interests that overweight them above and below. Ghirlandaio has this time approached, and has reached, his ideal by the only path by which it is ever possible effectively to reach it, namely, through a strong element of individual portraiture. They, stand, therefore, on a higher level, and are more convincing than his purely typical saints, ideals reached through a weak conventional type. The 'Anacletus' here and the 'Victor' (Plate XIV.), and the 'Clemens,' are admirable figures expressive of character and technically of high quality. The 'Felix' and the 'Dalmata' are also fine but less strong and less individual, while the 'Iginus' falls nearer to the level of his less characteristic ideal types. For once—it is very rarely that one can express such a wish—one would be glad to be able to see these fine works detached from their surroundings, when their high qualities would at once become apparent to us.

The frescoes of the eight popes already mentioned are those which seem to have in them work from Domenico's own hand, with various degrees of aid from assistants. And in several others, as the Alexander, Urbanus, Pontianus and Eleutherus, there are traces of work by men of his *bottega*. But the design and the draperies throughout the series are much modified by Botticelli's

Anderson *Sistine Chapel*

POPE VICTOR

influence, either because Botticelli, as the master responsible for the whole scheme, had furnished the design, or perhaps because Ghirlandaio was loyally endeavouring to suppress himself, and to bring his own work into harmony with that of his captain for the time being. It is very difficult, holding these alternative possibilities in mind, to say what particular portion may be due to an assistant from the Botticelli *bottega*, or to one who worked in Ghirlandaio's. Naturally the actual work of Domenico is to be sought in the faces. But there is, I am disposed to think, more of the master's hand in the figures and draperies than is always conceded, and that they are cast in Botticelli's mould of deliberate intention. Obviously if Ghirlandaio was actuated by the spirit of loyalty to Botticelli, so far that he allowed an assistant to complete in Botticelli's manners the draperies of a figure of which he himself had painted the face, there was nothing to make him unwilling to go further still, to the extent of working himself on the drapery and ornaments (the favourite Ghirlandaio brooch is more than once in evidence). And this I am inclined to think that he did more than we are accustomed to believe.

The question of the share of Ghirlandaio or his *bottega* in the fresco of the 'Passage of the Red Sea' which Vasari gave to Cosimo Rosselli, and which later writers have assigned to Piero di Cosimo, is a complicated question which could only be discussed with advantage at such length as to exclude more important matter from this book. If Domenico's own hand be entirely absent—and it is difficult to claim its presence—yet the share of his scholars in portions, at any rate, of the fresco is on the evidence of the eye a more probable assumption than that of Cosimo or his pupils.

It was during this sojourn in Rome that Domenico received commission from Giovanni Tornabuoni to fresco the walls of a chapel in the Minerva with subjects from the life of the Virgin, and from the life of St. John Baptist. In 1477 as we have said, Francesca di Luca Pitti, Giovanni's wife, had died, and for her

Andrea Verrocchio[1] had made the tomb concerning whose exact fate there has been much question. It seems probable that this tomb, together with that of Cecco Tornabuoni by Mino da Fiesole, stood in the chapel of San Giovanni Battista — the eponymous saint of Giovanni Tornabuoni—the second on the left. The chapel passed into the hands of another family in a later century, and was remodelled. The frescoes have disappeared, and the tomb of the lady also, while a portion only of Mino's work is preserved in another part of the church. Beyond this we do not hear of any work done in Rome by Domenico who in 1482 was once more at work in Florence on the decoration of the Sala dell' Orologio in the Palazzo Vecchio.

[1] See *Verrocchio* by Maud Cruttwell for a full examination of this question.

CHAPTER VI

THE PALAZZO VECCHIO FRESCO—MINOR EASEL PICTURES

WE do not know whether Domenico had put the last touches to his frescoes for Giovanni Tornabuoni in the chapel in the Minerva before he left Rome at the end of 1482, or whether he returned from time to time. In any case, it is certain that Florence became once more his headquarters, though, since we find that he drew payment from the Palazzo Publico at the beginning of three successive years, 1483-84-85, and since the work, judging by the usual rapidity of his painting, could hardly have occupied him continuously during that time, it seems very probable that he did from time to time absent himself to complete work elsewhere, and possibly in Rome.

The commission to decorate the Sala dell' Orologio was a high compliment to the young painter[1]—a fact, indeed, which shows that he was now fully recognised in Florence as one of the painters of the day, fitted to carry out great work of what may be called a national character. We might expect therefore to find from Domenico something that should stand at the very top of his art. Instead of this we find what must be called upon the whole the most disappointing and least memorable of all the works of his maturer period. We must seek the explanation in the fact that Domenico was set to handle his subject on lines which were uncongenial, and which, following immediately on the Sistine fresco, and perhaps also the Minerva fresco, produced in him a sense of dullness. For he was here called upon to represent, under the likeness of Roman heroes, the virtues which produce and are typical of a strong Republic. It is easy

[1] Botticelli was at work with him in the same place once more.

to see why he received orders to exhibit his Republican Virtues under such classical shapes as 'Brutus,' 'Scævola,' 'Camillus,' 'Decius,' 'Scipio,' 'Cicero,' placed in shallow recesses on a triumphal arch with 'Saint Zenobius and two other saints'[1] in the central arch to represent the faith and the religion of Florence. One recognises here a set theme given to Ghirlandaio, and not chosen by him—perhaps such humanists as Poliziano or Marsilio Ficino may have had their say in it. Obviously it would have been impossible to allow Domenico, or any other, to present upon the walls of the Palazzo Pubblico the features and garb of living Florentine citizens, such as he would have loved to have placed there if he could have had his way. He is restricted therefore to the representation of ancient classical heroes, and, dulled and chilled by the necessity, he falls into the conventional frame of mind which so strangely overtook most painters of the Renaissance when they fell to rendering the arms and the men and the accoutrements of the ancients. The task gave little scope for Domenico's special gifts. The heroes in their blue and yellow and green cuirasses, with the usual very unconvincing highly ornate armour on their legs and arms have, as is even the case with such strong men as Piero della Francesca and Mantegna himself, more the air of supernumeraries at a theatre, than men whose arms were meant for downright cut and thrust. Domenico's heroes of antiquity sadly lack the grit and manhood of his Florentines. That he liked the task too little to do it justice is also suggested by the apparent presence of a good deal of the handling of David and of Mainardi in these figures. The figures of the bishop and the saints are stronger, but all have been seriously injured and repainted in past days. But through the repaint it is possible to recognise in the saint on the left, some of that handiwork of Mainardi,[2] especially in the drawing of the right hand at the junction of the thumb. A very interesting point in

[1] The upper portion only of the left-hand saint remains, a door having been driven through the wall at this point.

[2] Comparison should be made with No. 1315 in the Uffizi, 'Three Saints' by Mainardi. This very interesting work is one of the best by this master, and it was recovered some

the fresco is the introduction of a painted bas-relief of the Virgin and child with two angels in the style of Andrea Verrocchio, a small but valuable testimony to the preferences of Domenico.

But if the figures in this wall-painting, which occupies the whole of one side of the Sala dell' Orologio, show only a half-hearted delight in the work, the architectural portion of it is as fine as anything which was ever done by Domenico or from his design. He seems to have found in it compensation for the loss of his favourite portrait groups. Possibly the presence of his old colleague of San Gimignano, Benedetto da Maiano, who was now again working with him at the sculptural decorations, put him on his mettle. He repeats with masterly execution the *guilloche* pattern which Benedetto so loves, and was using on the jambs of his portal opposite. The great triumphal arch, which Domenico uses for the accommodation of his heroes in their niches, is worthy of more convincing occupants, and is full of good craftsmanship. But of more special interest to us, and possibly also to the painter himself, is the view of the Duomo, Campanile, and Baptistry, which he has shown us at the side of the arch, giving us an exact record of the condition of these buildings at the time. The façade of the Duomo is shown us with its marble façade complete as far as a point which comes exactly level with the top of the first windows of the Campanile. The Baptistry is built round, on the side farthest from the Duomo, with houses, which are either actually attached to it or separated only by the narrowest of passages. These houses stand over the ground which is now the open Piazza between the Baptistry and the Vescovado.[1] And this loving little record, for which we cannot too much thank him, was to be the only truly Florentine touch which Ghirlandaio might allow himself here. It is for the lack of this very Florentine savour, which belongs so intimately to Domenico when he

thirty years ago from beneath another subject painted over it by a later and very inferior painter. I saw this picture when the upper subject was nearly removed, and can bear testimony to the care which had been used.

[1] A print of a bird's-eye view of Florence in about 1490, which exists at Berlin, and is reproduced in Edmund G. Gardner's *Florence*, corroborates Ghirlandaio's fresco.

is truly himself, that this fresco fails to take any hold on us, and leaves us cold and uninterested. The work, however, gave satisfaction in its day to those who were most concerned, for, before it was finished, Domenico received a further commission, dated May 20, 1483, to paint the altar-piece for the chapel of the Palace, 'of the quality, fashion, and form, such as shall seem good and pleasing to the Magnifico Lorenzo di Piero di Cosmo dei Medici.' This picture does not seem to have been painted, or, it is perhaps safer to say, has not been recognised, for it seems very improbable that such a commission, for such a place, and under the eye of such a lord, should have been ignored or passed over by Domenico, while, a year or two later, we find him freely accepting and completing other commissions. If one might believe that the commission was not completed till so late a date as 1487, then the tondo in the Uffizi, No. 1295, the 'Adoration of the Magi,' whose provenance is unknown,[1] might possibly be the missing altar-piece. It is, however, most improbable that it could have been so long deferred, and moreover there are in that tondo a considerable number of portraits, which even if they be Medici portraits (which is unlikely) would probably have been avoided in that particular place within the Palazzo Pubblico, at a time when the Medici were shrewdly aware of their precarious tenure of power. This brings us to the mention of one or two of Domenico's altar-pieces belonging to the earlier portion of his career. Of these, the picture No. 1297 in the Uffizi (Plate XV.) seems both by its style of handling, the freshness and simplicity of its thought, and its points of contact with Baldovinetti, to be amongst the earliest of the easel pictures which have come down to us from Ghirlandaio's hand. I should be inclined to set it down as coming between the San Gimignano and the Sistine work.[2] The Virgin sits beneath a

[1] G. Milanesi, however (see notes to Vasari, ed. 1906), believes this to have been one of the two tondi mentioned by Vasari as painted for the Church at Orbetello.

[2] Vasari describing this picture gives to it the highest praise: 'it could not for a thing in tempera be better done.' Painted for the Church of San Giusto, it was transferred to San Giovannino since called La Calza, whence it passed to the Uffizi.

Alinari *Alinari*

MADONNA ENTHRONED

canopy holding the Child upon her left knee, while he with one hand holds to his side a crystal ball surmounted by a jewelled cross, and raises the other hand in the act of blessing. The Virgin wears a rose-red robe, over which a blue robe, lined with green, is clasped across her breast by that brooch which appears so often—this time the central stone is blue instead of red—in Domenico's pictures, and is perhaps a memory of the Ghirlandaio goldsmith's shop. By her side stand attendant angels, two on either hand, crowned with garlands, and at once carrying the mind back to the 'Coronation' picture of the Accademia by Filippo Lippi. On the steps of her throne stand St. Michael and St. Raphael, two charming naïve figures, of whom the former reappears in more developed but not more engaging shape in the altar-piece, now at Munich, which Domenico designed for Sta. Maria Novella in the last years of his life. Below the steps, on either side, kneel the two bishop saints, St. Zenobius and St. Justus. A rich carpet of the kind beloved by Baldovinetti and Domenico lies upon the steps before the Madonna, while cypresses and oranges are seen against the sky in the upper part of the picture. The architectural setting is lovingly painted and strangely beset with pearls and jewels, an offence indeed to the architect, though a delight to the jeweller. The picture is thus full of the traits of Ghirlandaio's art, to which may be added one minor detail which recurs over and over again in his paintings, and may be called a persistent mannerism of the painter; I mean the curious upward and outward crooking of the little finger. If this peculiarity be looked for in the hands in any of his pictures painted after 1475, it will seldom be found to be wholly absent.

This 'Madonna Enthroned' has much charm together with some obvious shortcomings. It is delightful in its fresh, gay, simple pleasure in the brightness of youth and life. The Madonna has the sweet simple face of one who does not forecast her sorrow but is content with her present joy. She has in her attitude, and cast of drapery, and form, memories both of Filippo Lippi

and of Verrocchio. A sense of quiet, grave joyousness pervades the picture. But the colour is in parts crudely bright. The ultramarine blue, as so often happens, has held its own, while the colours of the rest of the picture have softened by age. But even when allowance is made for this mishap, which, indeed, in pictures of the period, often throws the colours, probably harmonious when painted, into slight discord to-day, the work suggests that the painter had seen each figure as a separate patch or set of patches of colour requiring to be looked at by itself in the primitive fashion, and this, indeed, was the method followed by Ghirlandaio in most or all of his easel pictures, though in some cases, as in the Innocenti and Accademia 'Adoration' pictures, the method is so well guided and watched that the colours not only do not fight amongst themselves, but, in spite of the fact that there is no blending nor fusion, produce a brilliant glow. But in this earlier Uffizi altar-piece some of the colours are set staringly against their neighbours. The flesh-tones have been painted on a ground of gesso prepared with green, on which the modelling is carried forward step by step, a common method with the painters of all the early schools of Italy. But the upper flesh-tones, too thinly painted, have weakened and allow the green to show through in unpleasant fashion. In spite, however, of these drawbacks, the picture is one which gives great pleasure, and is very well worth studying as a typical example of Domenico's early art. Another apparently early work, though not so early, is a similar subject, the 'Madonna Enthroned with Saints' of the Accademia (No. 66) whose provenance is unknown (Plate XVI.). This might possibly be the lost altar-piece of the Palazzo Vecchio but for the fact that the saints represented have no special fitness for that chapel, but, on the other hand, seem destined for, and probably came from, some Dominican church. The Madonna sits on high in a niche, with the Child upon her right knee, an angel at either arm of her throne holding a lily. To her left and right upon the steps stand St. Thomas Aquinas as a

MADONNA ENTHRONED

Dominican father, and St. Dionysius, while at the foot of the throne kneel St. Dominic and St. Clement, whose tiara rests upon the ground before him. Here again a rich carpet appears, and, against the sky above, trees and vases of flowers. But the whole picture is painted with less exuberance of ornament, and less light-hearted gaiety of circumstance, than the Uffizi rendering of the subject. There are more sober reserve and gravity, from Madonna and the angels to the saints who stand as her champions or kneel for her aid. There are, it must be added, more also of strength and assurance, both in the drawing and the handling of the work. Less pleasurable than the Uffizi picture, it is a work of a maturer hand. Especially to be noticed is the subdued effect of the architectural setting, as compared with the bejewelled gaiety of the Uffizi panel. It may be that criticism had, with no injustice, fastened on that dangerous departure in his earlier work. It may be that Domenico himself had felt the incongruity of an architrave set with precious stones. At any rate it appears no more in his work in that excessive form, though in the 'Visitation' of the Louvre of his latest years, carried to its end by David and Benedetto, the goldsmith's work is once more dangerously in evidence. In the Accademia picture one may again say that the colours, scarlet, blue, and rose, laid in pure masses on the tempera ground, have not quite learned to live in happy neighbourhood one with the other, though the blacks of the Dominicans have been useful in keeping order.

Of an early period again, though perhaps later than the two pictures just spoken of, is an altar-piece, once more of the same subject, now in the sacristy of San Martino at Lucca,[1] in which the Madonna is enthroned between St. Gregory and St. Augustine, with St. Peter and St. Paul below. This is the picture already mentioned in Chapter I., which repeats the motive of the Brozzi fresco (Plate III.), showing the Child standing at full length upon

[1] The picture was restored in 1835.

an open book. This Lucca picture differs from the two pictures which we have been discussing, in that the favourite upper background with the trees and the vases seen above the architecture is here omitted, and a richly patterned gold curtain is let down on either side to fill the space usually occupied in Domenico's work by the orange and the cypress. The Madonna reminds one of Verrocchio's reliefs, and of Filippo Lippi. The two apostles, somewhat duller perhaps than the vigorous portraits of the Accademia picture, are draped in the classical style of the Sistine saints, while the St. Sebastian, holding a single arrow, appears as a young Florentine.

In all the three altar-pieces which have now been mentioned, belonging to Ghirlandaio's early period, we are conscious that we are looking at the work of a young painter, who as yet has not wholly found himself, but still in his young unguarded, healthy speech, allows himself to tell us who are his heroes, whom he admires, whom he would wish to emulate. We see memories, faint enough, of Baldovinetti and the studio days; stronger and more enthusiastic tokens of his admiration for Verrocchio and Filippo Lippi; here and there a sign that he felt the influence of his fellow-worker Botticelli; yet in none of these cases is his admiration so expressed that he becomes a follower or a copyist. We see something in these early works that makes us think of each or all of these men, to be sure, but we see much more that makes us think of Ghirlandaio only. He is always trying to be himself, and gradually coming to himself. A picture such as the 'Enthroned Madonna' of the Uffizi, is the true forerunner of the frescoes of the Novella choir.

In the Palazzo Comunale of Narni, there is now to be seen a large panel of the 'Coronation of the Virgin,' which was once in the church of San Girolamo in that town. This picture was formerly attributed to Giovanni Spagna, owing to the existence at Todi of a document in which commission is given to 'Magister Johannes *alias* Spagna' to paint a picture like that in San Girolamo

Alinari *San Marino, Lapi*

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in Narni.[1] It is now recognised that that merely gives to Giovanni Spagna the lines on which his work is to be done. There exists, in the Palazzo Corsini in Rome, a drawing of a 'Coronation of the Virgin' which is sometimes regarded as Ghirlandaio's design or suggestion for the Narni panel. To myself the treatment seems so unwholly unlike, that I am quite unable to view the two in connection with one another. The resemblance goes no further than the fact that each is a design from Domenico's hand for a 'Coronation' picture in which the arrangement of some of the lower figures is not dissimilar. The Narni picture shows signs of help from scholars, and has, furthermore, been largely repainted in oil, to its great loss. In spite, however, of this, and of a certain formality and poverty in the composition, the work is still a fine one, though not of the master's finest. The Virgin kneeling reverently before the Saviour, who places the crown upon her head, reminds one, both by her type and robe, of the Virgin in the 'Presentation in the Temple' of the Novella series. The picture is divided into two halves, the upper half composed of saints and angels, who, badly grouped and over-crowded, surround the central figures, while the lower part is composed of some three-and-twenty bishops and saints, male and female. The lower portion is by far the finer and stronger, and contains much of Domenico's own work.

An 'Annunciation' executed in 1482 in the Chapel of St. John in the Collegiata (Cathedral) of San Gimignano, though still shown as a work by Domenico, is from the hand of Mainardi, upon a design by this master. The picture in the Palazzo' Comunale at Rimini, of 'St. Vincent, St. Roch, and St. Sebastian, which also bears Ghirlandaio's name, is by scholars, or possibly David and Benedetto. It is an inferior work, hardly worthy of the praise which Vasari gives to it.

[1] The Narni 'Coronation' had also been given to Raphael, and to Filippo Lippi. But a document of June 3, 1486, preserved at Florence, provides, by agreement between the Prior of San Girolamo of Narni, and D. Ghirlandaio, for the substitution of Pietro di Ser Lorenzo for Francesco d'Antonio (dead) to help to estimate the price of this very picture.

CHAPTER VII

THE SASSETTI CHAPEL IN STA. TRINITA

IN 1485 Domenico Ghirlandaio received a commission to execute a series of frescoes in Sta. Trinita, which was destined to show him at the very height of his power. Francesco Sassetti[1] was a man of wealth and influence in Florence, closely allied with the great banking firm of the Medici, and once upon a time its representative at Lyons. He owned the chapel in Sta. Trinita, second to the right from the choir. This chapel he had destined to be the resting-place of himself and his well-loved wife, Nera Corsi, and here in fact they rest under tombs on either side of the chapel, made for them by Giuliano da Sangallo. Sassetti chose for the subjects which Domenico was to paint upon the walls of the chapel above them, the Life of San Francesco, so that he might sleep his last sleep in presence of the history of the saint who had given him his name. The reader will not need to be reminded that every child born in Florence was baptized at the only existing font in the Baptistry, and bore always the name of a saint under whose protection his life was thus to be placed. And so we find Sassetti paying honour to St. Francis, his protecting saint, by the frescoes of the Trinita, and Giovanni Tornabuoni commissioning the series of the life of John Baptist, in the Minerva in Rome, and again in the Novella in Florence. Indeed, this affection for an eponymous saint is the key to the origin of many an Italian

[1] A bust believed to represent Francesco Sassetti, and attributed to Antonio Rossellino, is to be seen in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum at Berlin.

Alinari

ST. FRANCIS RENOUNCES HIS POSSESSIONS

picture. In the case of these Trinita frescoes, it is clear that Domenico's choice was limited to the manner of treatment, the subjects themselves having now come to be regarded as already prescribed, and as in some sort compulsory, being founded on the series which Giotto had made immortal. We find that Benedetto da Maiano, in treating the life of the saint on his pulpit at Sta. Croce, employs the same set of subjects. Accordingly, we have six subjects set forth to us in two rows of frescoes, which follow the three walls of the chapel thus:—The top row (1) 'St. Francis renounces his worldly goods'; (2) 'Pope Honorius confirms the rules of the order'; (3) 'St. Francis offers to undergo the ordeal of fire before the Sultan.' Lower row (4) 'St. Francis receives the stigmata at La Verna'; (5) 'St. Francis restores to life the dead child of the Spini'; (6) 'The funeral of St. Francis.' The chapel is narrow and tall, and the light is very bad, except for a few hours of any day. This absence of light has probably helped to darken the pictures which, like all Domenico's fresco in his maturer day, were already low in tone. It is impossible to get far enough away from them to see them in a proper light and at a suitable angle. But in spite of all disadvantages they hold their place amongst the most admirable of the fifteenth-century frescoes of Florence. It is difficult to find higher praise. They are, on the whole, in good condition, having suffered more from the needless planting of ladders upon their surface during church decorations than from the action of decay. In consequence of these injuries repainting has taken place in parts, and has as usual gone beyond the necessities of mere repair. There are, however, few frescoes of equal age which have stood better the test of time.

The series begins high up on the left wall with the 'Renunciation by St. Francis of his Patrimony' (Plate XVIII.). The story runs that the boy, having been shut up by his father Pietro Bernardone, who thought him demented, escaped and fled to the Bishop of Assisi, before whom, flinging off all his clothes

in token that he renounced all that was his, he made his declaration of voluntary poverty. The moment is chosen when the Bishop, receiving the boy, folds him in his mantle, while the father, in an attitude of impatience and disappointment, is restrained by a friend, who gently lays his hand upon Bernardone's shoulder with an expression of remonstrance. Other bystanders, fourteen in number, fill up the foreground, while behind is a seaport town[1] with a river or estuary crowded with ships, from which merchandise is being carried to the great gate of the town—this no doubt to indicate the source of Pietro Bernardone's merchant-wealth, and what it was that his son was resigning. All the figures appear to be from Domenico's hand, except perhaps the two farthest back in the centre of the picture, which probably came from David or Mainardi. The background with its small figures, which are long and spidery, is also due to the weaker hand of his brothers. Some of these portraits are very fine and full of character, and especially beautiful is the boy fourth from the right in the middle of the group, who wears a sleeve slashed with white. Full of character, too, is the man on the extreme left with dark locks and a round berretta, whose face bears some resemblance to Verrocchio (a man of fifty in 1485). If the face of the father, Pietro Bernardone, is compared with the face of Tommaso Bigordi Ghirlandaio in the Novella group, it will be found that Domenico has used his own father as a study for the father of St. Francis.

The motive of the picture proclaims itself at a glance. The contrast between the kneeling figure of the boy having nothing yet possessing all things, and the splendid figure of the bishop in crimson robe and white rochet, surrounded on both sides by the throng of well-dressed Florentines, who still are of the world which he is leaving, is splendidly and simply given. The nakedness of the boy, the purple and fine linen of the bishop

[1] Perhaps this is meant for Lyons or Marseilles, whither Bernardone was wont to trade. The mother of St. Francis was Pica, a girl of Provence.

Alinari *Trinità*

HONORIUS III GRANTS THE CHARTER TO ST. FRANCIS

Alinari *Trinita*

GROUP WITH LORENZO DEI MEDICI

and of the bystanders, tell the tale of the coming life in Ghirlandaio's best fashion—which, to be sure, is not Giotto's fashion, is not so full of the spiritual and the mystic, but, on the other hand, has a certain pathetic truthfulness to the main fact of the renunciation which may have spoken even more effectively to the Florentine audience of his day. One does not set up Ghirlandaio as a profound moralist, or a great teacher of spiritual truths, but one may claim for him that he saw either as artist, or thinker, or both, what those who looked upon his pictures would have done well to see also, the meaning of the great contrast between the figure of a St. Francis, and the figure of a Florentine burgher or churchman of his day; and he gives it to us here in a grand and clearly-speaking shape.

The second picture, highest on the back wall, represents 'Honorius III. receiving and approving the rules of the Frati Minori' of the order of St. Francis (Plate XIX.), which the latter, kneeling, hands to the Pope. Behind St. Francis kneel seven brothers of the order, and, seated upon either side of them, ten monks witness the scene. Beyond, in the background, are seen the Loggia dei Lanzi, and farther to the left, the Palazzo Vecchio with the Ringhiera platform in front of it, and the Marzocco Lion upon it.

This picture is not so full as some of the other subjects with portrait figures, but what there are are of extreme interest from the fact that we are able to identify them. The bald-headed man on the steps to the extreme right is Francesco Sassetti himself, with his son at his left side. The old white-headed man is probably Sassetti's father, while in the middle, quite unmistakable, stands Lorenzo dei Medici[1] (Plate XX.), who holds out his left hand to greet Angelo Poliziano—the tutor of his boys, whose likeness can be compared with the medal by Niccolò Fiorentino—with Giuliano dei Medici at his side. Behind Poliziano follow the two other boys, Piero, afterwards ruler of Florence, and Giovanni,

[1] Vasari, *sub* Domenico Ghirlandaio.

afterwards Leo x. Others, however, see Giovanni in the small boy at Poliziano's side, and Giuliano (the Giuliano of the Medici tomb) in the light-haired boy behind. I am not aware that attention has ever been drawn to a very interesting point in this composition. If the eye is carried up from this group of Sassetti and Lorenzo, Poliziano, and the boys, to the group with the Honorius, St. Francis, and his brethren, it will be found that Domenico has repeated the composition of the upper group in the lower. He has made the Poliziano ascending the steps, book in hand, to Lorenzo correspond to the St. Francis ascending the steps to present his rules to the Pope. The Medici boys following their tutor correspond to the line of Franciscan brethren following their Master. That this is done of deliberate intention there can, I think, be no question, and the meaning soon becomes apparent. As Honorius represents religion and religious learning, and greets St. Francis, who is to be the teacher of the Franciscans and of his faithful sons of the church—whereto he is giving his approval and assent—so Lorenzo is the patron of letters and learning, of which Poliziano is the teacher to his sons, and thence to the people of Florence—and to this secular learning Lorenzo also on his part, who is receiving Poliziano with one of his books, is pledging his approval as Honorius is pledging his to the spiritual.

Much repainting has taken place upon this fresco, the robes having suffered from the use of oil upon them. The Lorenzo has been entirely refreshed, and the Sassetti also, and many of the heads have been retouched. The figures in the foreground were almost all by Domenico, but, as in the 'Renunciation' scene, the background and the smaller figures are not from his hand.

The third subject—highest on the right wall—gives a well-known episode in the life of the saint, who, after suffering shipwreck *en route*, reached Morocco with the intention of converting the Soldan and his country to Christianity. He challenged the Imaum of the Soldan to the ordeal by fire—that same ordeal which Savonarola himself, twenty-three years later, was to chal-

lenge to his own sad undoing. The Soldan declined the test, and presently, believing St. Francis to be insane, caused him to be carried back to Europe. This subject has been left by Domenico almost wholly in the hands of Mainardi and his brothers, David and Benedetto. There is one very fine portrait of a young man, with thin face and dark hair, at the extreme right—quite a Bigordi face—which I believe to be a portrait of David Ghirlandaio by Domenico, while on the extreme left is the face of a young man who, on comparison with the group at Sta. Maria Novella, seems to be Mainardi, and is perhaps done by himself.

In the lower row the series continues from the left-hand wall, on which is painted 'St. Francis receiving the Stigmata at La Verna.' Here the figures are executed by Mainardi, while the rocky landscape of the Casentino about La Verna, and the characteristic Ghirlandaio trees, are due to David. The familiar incident of the hawk striking the wild duck—almost equivalent to a Ghirlandaio signature—is to be seen in the open sky; the town of Pisa with the leaning tower is introduced to the right. To himself and to his own hand almost entirely Domenico reserved the remaining two subjects, and nowhere did his art in colour, composition, grouping, portraiture, and power of telling a story reach a higher point. The fifth subject, lowest on the back wall, represents the 'Miraculous Recall to Life of a Child of the Spini Family' (Plate XXI.), who had fallen from a window of the Spini Palace. At the earnest prayer of the mother and of two Franciscan brethren, a vision of St. Francis appears in the sky and the child is restored. The composition of this piece shows Domenico employing as his foundation a system of parallel straight lines in the central foreground, corrected and contradicted to the eye by the lines of his perspective, which radiate from a point in the centre of the picture and draw the eye towards the central interest, which in this instance is the little child sitting up on the bier. This use of parallel straight lines in the lower part of his composition is a favourite method with Ghirlandaio, some-

times through the actual lines of a bier, a bed, a balustrade, the lines of a room, or some other confining line or lines of architecture —at other times by the horizontal lines given by the grouping of his figures. In his Madonna pictures it is obtained by the straight lines of the steps of his thrones. In this particular fresco of the Spini miracle the method is employed in its most exaggerated form, and the horizontal lines of the marble bench and the child's bier certainly force themselves upon the eye with somewhat unpleasant insistence. The scene is laid in the Piazza Santa Trinita, the façade of the latter church being seen upon the right, with the Palazzo Spini (now Ferroni, and much altered) upon the left. The eye is carried through the centre of the picture to the primitive bridge, as it then stood, of the Trinita, and across to the point now occupied by the Piazza Frescobaldi and the Via Maggio. From the window of the Spini Palace the child is seen falling, the mother looking out of the window, and a man below rushing vainly to the rescue. From the portal of the Trinita church, the *becchini*, preceded by an acolyte with a banner, come forth to carry the dead child to the vigil in the church. These background figures and the architecture are the only portion of the fresco in which the hand of his assistants can be distinctly traced. The portrait groups to left and right are of Domenico's most individual and personal stamp. And the child's figure on the richly carpeted bier, with the mother holding out her hands towards the little one which has been given back to her, while a small sister, just tall enough to reach up, lifts her head above the level of the bier, brings us back to the sweetness and simplicity of the San Gimignano days.

The portraits are, as we have said, of Domenico's best quality, but in spite of apparent help from Vasari we are forced to confess once more that our means of identification are very small. Vasari's words are, 'where there are painted Maso degli Albizzi, Messer Agnolo Acciaiuoli, Messer Palla Strozzi, notable citizens, and in the histories of that city renowned enough.' They were, indeed.

Alinari *Trinità*

THE HEALING OF THE SPINI CHILD

But this fresco, we shall remember, was painted in 1485, and as we look at these portraits nothing seems more assured to us than that they are portraits from the life of men as Ghirlandaio saw them. Now Maso (Tommaso) degli Albizzi died in the year 1417, having been, with Niccolò Uzzano, one of the founders and strongest leaders of the Ottimati party. These men, with Agnolo Acciaiuoli and Palla Strozzi, had been the strongest possible opponents of the growing power of the Medici. Agnolo Acciaiuoli had been banished for life, and was long dead, and Palla Strozzi likewise had been sent into exile and practical confinement at Padua, where he died, staunch to the last to the liberties of Florence, at the age of ninety-two. Domenico had never set eyes on any of the three. And the names of these three men, especially when united, had become to all Florentines the synonym for enmity to the Medici and a challenge to their power. Art, it is true, knows no politics, and the artists of Florence enjoyed a strange immunity from suspicion of partisanship so long as they visibly espoused no cause. But to have inserted the portraits of these three champions, long dead or long invisible, in Florence would have been visibly to espouse the cause of Lorenzo's enemies. Nothing is more unlikely than that Ghirlandaio should have ventured on such an open challenge, or that Sassetti should have countenanced it. Vasari has evidently confused the names of these personages. It will be remembered that another Maso (Tommaso) degli Albizzi was living at this moment, no foe to the Medici, but sufficiently honoured by them to have formed one of that embassy to Sixtus, who in 1480 made submission in the picturesque scene at the great bronze doors of St. Peter's. This is evidently the Maso degli Albizzi[1] whom Domenico was known to have painted, and whom Vasari, by his coupling him with the other two names, mistook for the long-buried patriot. With regard to Agnolo Acciaiuoli, there were still living in Florence members of that

[1] It will be remembered that this Maso degli Albizzi was father to Giovanna, who married the ill-fated Lorenzo Tornabuoni (see pages 109 and 118).

family who were under no ban of the Medici, and Agnolo was an often-repeated Christian name of the family.[1] With regard to Palla Strozzi, it is quite incredible that he, whose piteous fate was already so calculated to excite the compassion of the Florentines, should have been placed here. Far more probable is it that Ghirlandaio represented here the elder Filippo Strozzi, who, though once an exile and known supporter of the Ottimati, had been received back into favour, was a man of great importance, and a year later, by the advice, it is said, of Lorenzo himself, began the Strozzi Palace, a few hundred yards from this very church, which was indeed his parish church, though he himself, owning a chapel in Sta. Maria Novella, lies buried there beneath the tomb which Benedetto da Maiano carved.

Here, then, I venture to think, we have the explanation of Vasari's words, and though we deprive ourselves of a most interesting belief, we find ourselves once more back in an atmosphere of possibility. But we are no nearer than before to the identification of any given portrait in the very striking group of citizens on the right. The bald-headed man with his cap suspended on his back seems to have some resemblance to the medal of Filippo Strozzi by an unknown medallist. Of Acciaiuoli we know no portrait with which to compare these faces, nor yet of Maso degli Albizzi, though it would seem certain that he must appear somewhere upon the walls of Santa Maria Novella, where his daughter's beautiful portrait stands. Of the group of young men and girls on the left Vasari says: 'He painted in two pictures on either side of the altar-piece (*tavola*), Francesco Sassetti on his knees in one, and in the other Madonna Nera, his lady, and his sons (but these in the story above, where the child is revived), with certain beautiful girls of the same family, whose names I have not been able to recover; all with the dress and fashions of that age—a thing of no small pleasure.' We need not go beyond Vasari's words. We know no more than he what names were borne in

[1] A later Agnolo Acciaiuoli lies buried in the Certosa.

life by the beautiful girl and even more beautiful boy, probably husband and wife, who stand side by side, the one with hands clasped upon her brocaded dress, the other with his right hand raised in true Italian gesture of astonishment. There is a strange fascination in these portraits, which look out at us from these Italian fifteenth-century groups, in trying to guess at the secret of their lives, and seeing only the faces and the forms, the cloth of gold, the vesture of damask, which they trusted to the painter. 'Ill did those ancient men to trust thee with their story.' The painter's art can tell us no more than that these men and girls and boys were once strong, or young, or beautiful, and that they once lived and died, and while they lived they walked in the same piazzas and heard the same speech as we who walk in Florence of to-day.

The last great fresco of the series, the 'Burial of St. Francis' (Plate XXII.), the first in everything except position, is the lowest on the right wall. If a photograph of it be placed beside one of the 'Burial of Sta. Fina' at San Gimignano, it will be seen at once that this Trinita fresco is a development, with, in every respect, maturer power and more complete mastery, of the earlier work. The figure of the saint lies on the bier across the middle of the picture — here we get in the accustomed place the painter's favourite horizontal lines, which repeat themselves in the lines of the altar above, and are echoed and multiplied in the straight lines of the architraves high up to left and right. The eye is made to accept as its chief interest, not the figure of the dead saint, but the figures of the three or four brothers exactly in the centre of the picture who bend over the body of their dead master. The point of sight to which the lines of the upper architecture converge will be found by experiment to be exactly half-way up the shaft of the cross. The head of the brother who stands highest is a little below that point, and from him as a centre the attendant figures, the acolytes on the right, the bishop and his deacons on the left, radiate outwards and slightly downwards. No man ever seems

to have planned the composition of his pictures more thoughtfully than Ghirlandaio, and though his method may usually be arrived at, he cannot be accused of formalism or pedantry. The figures take their place well and naturally, the defect, of course, which we must freely recognise, being that too often, owing to his habitual insertion of so large a number of portraits—the chorus of his tragedy as we have called it—there is a lack of concentration on the leading interest of his scene. The faces are apt, through the exigencies of portraiture, to be looking out at the spectator rather than inwards at the scene, no matter how moving or solemn or absorbing it should have been to them.[1] In this fresco, however, that fault, though still apparent in one or two of the faces, is less present than usual. We cannot find in it, it is true, that intense reality of grief, that spiritual sympathy, which makes Giotto's rendering of the 'Death of St. Francis' inferior doubtless in the qualities of advanced figure drawing, scientific architecture, composition, and painter's technique, still a far more real thing to our imagination. Giotto was busied with the fact and its meaning; Ghirlandaio with the fact as it would have met the eye under his set conditions and with his set and sumptuous surroundings. And with this difference in aim and feeling, Ghirlandaio has made his picture very real. This time, though some are not attending, no one seems to have come, as is sometimes the case, to show his fine clothes. The scene is really the burial of St. Francis as Ghirlandaio sees it happen—not an exhibition of Florentine notables with the figure of the saint thrown in. The brothers that bend over the dead are showing in their various fashions genuine grief. The handsome young doubter of Assisi, in his red tunic with blue sleeves, who refused to believe in the stigmata till he should have touched them, leans over to place his hand upon the saint's side. The face is only partly seen as he bends forward over the bier, his rich dark hair presented towards us, but it would be difficult to put

[1] The effect is to some extent the inevitable result of introducing large numbers of portrait heads, of which a certain number must of necessity be made to face the spectator.

Alinari *Trinita*

THE FUNERAL OF ST. FRANCIS

more expression more naturally into a mere pose. Domenico, by his use of exact and lifelike portrait, creates for himself a difficulty which many another painter could spare himself; for a face, even if it be at the bedside of a dying saint, may still be commonplace, or even vulgar, and the face of the man just above the doubter—he seems a doubter also—may well be so described, but the old brother, highest in the middle, who, I think, is meant for that friar who died over the bier of St. Francis crying: 'Tarry, brother, I come,' is a very noble face. The two bystanders on the far right are probably members of the Sassetti family, and have a resemblance to two of the shepherds in the 'Adoration,' now in the Accademia (195), which was the altar-piece of this same chapel. The young man with the dark hood behind the bishop is Domenico himself.

This great fresco, which is in good condition on the whole, though not without repainting, the robe of the kneeling monk in the foreground (whose drapery is repeated in other works, especially the Uffizi *tondo*, No. 1295), as well as other portions of the dresses in the foreground being renewed, was throughout the work of Domenico, who seems to have put his whole strength into it, and who nowhere shows his art at a more high and dignified level. If it were necessary to name one single work by which the painter must be content to stand or fall, one would be hard put to it to choose between this and the Sistine fresco.

The vaulting of the chapel is preserved with a blue ground, and in each triangular space produced by the intersection of the ribs sits a draped 'Sibyl,' too high to be well seen. There survive to us three chapels in which Domenico has been called upon to decorate a similar vaulting—San Gimignano, Sta. Maria Novella, and this Sassetti chapel. In each case he has adopted the method of placing single figures in the triangles, either 'Sibyls,' as here, or 'Prophets' and 'Evangelists.' The plan is the simplest and most obvious, and avoids difficulties, but in none of the three cases has Domenico given us a great result. True, that in each

instance this part of the work has been mainly left to pupils, as here, but the design is doubtless from Domenico's hand, certainly under his supervision. He lacked the matchless power of his great pupil, Michelangelo, to use the human figure in such a way as at once to express a mighty idea and to fill a difficult space. The figures of Domenico sit isolated in their spaces, with three empty and awkwardly-shaped smaller triangles at head and feet. Individually they are finely-drawn figures, but, placed as they are, they neither compel us to admire them by their majesty, nor ask us to divine their secret by their mystery. Herein, to say truth, they are neither better nor worse than similar figures in similar positions by other painters. But Domenico cannot claim to have solved, or even to have tried to solve, a difficult problem.

If the 'Sibyls' by reason of their position are hard to see, still more impossible is it to judge fairly of a fresco outside the chapel above the arch, which represents the 'Tiburtine Sibyl,' according to the legend, who appears to Augustus and Virgil and foretells the coming of Christ. This fresco is mentioned with praise by Vasari, but having been covered up by whitewash was regarded, even so lately as Milanesi's last edition of that author, as having perished. It has now been recovered from under the whitewash by Professor Conti, and though of course much injured and repainted, is once more to be seen where Vasari saw it. The view of Rome and the valley of the Tiber in this fresco is interesting, and records Domenico's mixed memories of his sojourn there.

Below the fresco of the 'Spini Miracle,' as Vasari has already told us, are to be found the portraits of Francesco Sassetti and his wife upon their knees, on either side of the altar-space, and under them the date of the completion of the work, given to the very day—MCCCCLXXXV. XV. DECEMBRIS.

CHAPTER VIII

BENEDETTO DA MAIANO AND GHIRLANDAIO

I HAVE reserved for one brief chapter a question which has hardly received the consideration which it deserves, namely, the influence which passed from Ghirlandaio to the sculptor, Benedetto da Maiano, or *vice versâ*. So far as I know, all writers who have alluded to the unmistakable existence of this influence have taken the view that Ghirlandaio inspired Benedetto da Maiano with his motives. I am compelled to adopt the contrary opinion.

Benedetto da Maiano, the Florentine sculptor, was born in 1442. He was therefore seven years older than Domenico Ghirlandaio. If any one will take the trouble to place a set of photographs of the reliefs of the life of St. Francis from Benedetto's pulpit in Sta. Croce (Plate XXIII.)—sometimes called the most beautiful pulpit in Italy—side by side with photographs of Ghirlandaio's Sta. Trinita series of the same subject (Plate XXII.), he will at once be struck by certain motives which occur in both in almost identical form. Selecting one only from each, for convenience sake, we shall find the resemblance strongest in the 'Death of the Saint' (Plates XXII., XXIII.). The composition here may be said to be common to the sculptor and to the painter.[1]

Now, with regard to Benedetto's great work, we are without

[1] A set of terra-cottas purporting to be Benedetto da Maiano's original clay models for the celebrated Santa Croce pulpit are to be seen in the Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington.

documentary assurance as to the date at which the pulpit was completed. Marcel Reymond places it in or after 1480. Dr. W. Bode believes it to have been finished before 1474. With the latter view I wholly agree, and the fact that Benedetto's bust of Pietro Mellini, for whom he executed the Sta. Croce pulpit, bears the date 1474, is also suggestive that about that time Benedetto was in close touch with Pietro Mellini, who was likely to have been a frequent visitor to the studio while the pulpit was in making. Now if that view is right, then it would seem evident that it was Benedetto da Maiano who, before 1475, created the composition which Ghirlandaio in 1485, ten years later, was content to use for the Trinita fresco. The composition in an immaturer form had already been used by Ghirlandaio in his fresco at San Gimignano which, as we have in an early chapter shown reason to think, was done in or shortly before 1475. Benedetto was then at work for his shrine of Sta. Fina at San Gimignano, which bears date 1475, in the same chapel. It is probable that the brothers Giuliano and Benedetto da Maiano were friendly with Ghirlandaio. Since Giuliano was the architect of that beautiful chapel, it is highly probable that he had some voice in naming Ghirlandaio to decorate it in fresco. It is noticeable that the latter uses in his fresco in the chapel the forms of architecture which Giuliano was actually employing in the chapel itself. Everything seems to point to the probability that Domenico Ghirlandaio had come under the influence of Benedetto, who was the older man by seven years, rather than that Domenico in 1485 developed the composition of the Trinita fresco, which Benedetto was after that date—for this would be necessary—to adopt for the Sta. Croce pulpit. Few students of Italian sculpture would, I think, be ready to adopt so late a date as 1485 onwards for that pulpit, yet if an earlier date be adopted, it makes Benedetto to be the predecessor. The latter indeed is the view which I should maintain.

The subject of the 'Death of St. Francis' is that which

Alinari *Soc. Coop. Firenze*

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(BENEDETTO DA MAIANO)

can best be appealed to in this question. But the 'Honorius' group and 'St. Francis receiving the Stigmata' also bear, less importantly, upon the point. I would add that, in Sta. Maria Novella, the figure of the executioner in the 'Murder of Saint Peter'—not painted by Domenico himself, but part of his scheme—at once takes us to the executioner in the Sta. Croce pulpit.

The interdependence of the arts of Sculpture and Painting in the fifteenth century is too well known to need any words here, but as a rule it had been the sculptors who led the way, and who supplied the motive to the painters rather than received it from them. This in itself is an argument for which too much may not be claimed, however, since there are instances in the other direction. The adoption of some motive which had already been created by sculptor or painter was, as I have already pointed out, a privilege commonly and frankly made use of throughout the whole course of Italian art. From Niccolò Pisano to Michelangelo there was none who did not in greater or less degree express his training, his preferences and admirations—for it came to little more than that—in this clearly perceptible manner. The painters of that age were far less concerned with originating fresh motives, than in expressing what already existed in the manner which best suited their own personality. Sta. Croce is a short walk only from the Trinita, and the keen eye of the Florentines would have been quick to detect and to resent any violation of the unwritten law of artistic chivalry if such there had been.

I hold that the name of Benedetto da Maiano must be added to the list of those whose influence is to be traced in the work of Domenico Ghirlandaio. It is probable that Domenico had been brought into relationship with Giuliano and Benedetto in Florence itself, and that that relationship did not take its commencement from their work together at San Gimignano, but rather that Ghirlandaio's engagement at the latter place may

have been due to Giuliano, who as a craftsman and *intarsiatore* would have been likely enough to be in close touch with the *bottega* of Tommaso del Ghirlandaio, in the first place, and of Baldovinetti,[1] in the second place. This, however, is once more merely one of those interesting conjectures for which too much must not be claimed. But Giuliano himself is a striking example of that unity of all the Arts which was the special strength and glory of Florentine Renaissance days. Giuliano, whose fame depends mainly on his achievement as an architect, begins his career in a branch of art which might seem even more specialised than the craft of the goldsmith, namely as an inlayer of wood. His training for that work is as complete and thorough and on the same lines as if he had been originally destined to be architect, sculptor, or painter. He remains in that craft for a full thirty years, and then steps with the same ease into the path of the architect, as his younger brother, Benedetto, similarly trained and apprenticed, into the path of the sculptor, or the goldsmith Domenico, into that of the painter. In this same art of *intarsia* which Giuliano pursued, as also in the goldsmith's, the forms of classical architecture played a very leading part, and it is perfectly possible—though here we are once more in the region of fascinating conjecture—that Domenico's delight in the perspective problems of classical architecture may have received no small impulse from his friendship with the brothers from Maiano. Echoes of Giuliano's architectural work are to be seen, as we have said, in the San Gimignano frescoes, and one is conscious in that chapel of the complete accord which existed between the three men, Architect, Sculptor, and Painter, who worked together for the completion of that masterpiece. The personality of a great artist—especially one whose nature was as

[1] In 1465 Giuliano da Maiano worked in company with Maso Finiguerra, the famous goldsmith, and Alesso Baldovinetti in the north sacristy of the Cathedral of Florence, the first-named *intarsiatore* for the wardrobes: Maso as designer of five figures whose heads were painted by Baldovinetti. Giuliano's Capuan Gate at Naples will not be forgotten.

receptive as that of Ghirlandaio—is made up of the union of many strands—not all visible, but all combining for strength and cohesion. It has seemed well to devote a page or two to the discussion of an influence which appears to have come into the early life of Ghirlandaio and bore visible fruit in his later career.

CHAPTER IX

OTHER ALTAR-PIECES AND EASEL PICTURES

CONCERNING the altar-piece in tempera of the Sassetti chapel, the 'Adoration of the Shepherds,' Vasari writes: 'And together he accompanied this work [the frescoes] with a picture by his own hand, worked in tempera, which has in it a 'Nativity of Christ' to make any intelligent person marvel: wherein he painted himself and made some heads of shepherds that are held a thing divine.' To-day we may test Vasari's judgment in the Accademia delle Belle Arti, where the picture (Plate XXIV.) stands (No. 195), having been succeeded in the Sassetti chapel by a copy. It bears the same date as the fresco — MCCCCLXXXV. — on a stone above one of the pilasters. Domenico's sturdy adherence through all his life to the earlier process of tempera, and the safety and simplicity of his technique, have had their reward in preserving this and other of his pictures, in spite of some retouchings, in a state which enables us to judge the value of Vasari's praise. It is not over-stated. Less desirable perhaps than the superb altar-piece of the Innocenti, presently to be spoken of, this is still one of the masterpieces of the fifteenth century. The Virgin in a dark blue robe, whose border, wrought with a gold pattern to delight the heart of a goldsmith, spread around her in a circle, kneels with her hands folded and looks down at the babe, who, thumb in mouth and curling himself together, with his leg kicking, is showing delight after the manner of babies. The face of the Virgin is very beautiful. I

Alinari

Accademia

THE ADORATION OF THE SHEPHERDS, 1485

Alinari

Uffizi

THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI, 1487

have already, in some earlier remarks on Domenico's portraiture, expressed the view that he did not in his Madonnas resort to the direct portrait of an individual as he did in his groups, and that if any exception is found to that rule it will be found here. This is not the stately Madonna, the grave, majestic queen of heaven, as in his Madonnas enthroned. Here she has stepped from her throne—she is the human Madonna—in simple dress with no ornament—any mother with any child—a beautiful, pure being, but such as one may have seen, and has seen, in life. The shepherds are characteristic portraits, whose faces should be compared with those in the 'Death of St. Francis'—there is no Domenico's portrait amongst them, in spite of Vasari. We may, too, perhaps doubt if quite all is from Domenico's own hand. The gay, but wooden, procession of horsemen savours of Benedetto, and the landscape, with its stiff, toy-like trees and hard, clear distance, not brought together by any atmospheric softening, make us remember that five years before Domenico had painted the fresco of the Sistine, which possesses the very qualities in which this landscape is lacking.

The round panel of the Uffizi (No. 1295), 'The Adoration of the Kings' (Plate XXV.), bears date a year or two later, 1487. It cannot in stronger qualities rank with the Sassetti nor with the Innocenti works, but by reason of its gaiety and life, and the presence of a certain naïve delight in bright colours and strange uniforms and animals and flowers—for Ghirlandaio's favourite flower, the Star of Bethlehem, carpets the foreground — is a fascinating picture. Here the Virgin's throne is lowlier than in most cases, just as she herself is less of a queen and more of a village maiden than in the Innocenti group. She sits on a low pedestal—a marble fragment which has fallen from the ruined classical arches seen beyond. Indeed, it may be said that the fault of this *tondo* is that neither by colour nor form nor by any special dignity or attractiveness does the Madonna sufficiently take her place as the central absorbing interest to which all the rest should be

complementary. Here, to use the modern expression, the interest is scattered too much all over the picture, and in the same way the actual composition of the picture tends to dislocation. It is easy to see that the painter intended to make the Madonna the actual centre of this circle in a true geometrical sense as well as in a suggestive sense. But the eye finds itself wandering round the crowded figures disposed near the circumference, asking for some special point at which it may find rest. One would be relieved if the upper line of soldiers and animals which stretch across the picture had been made more secondary. There is indeed in the foreground no lack of figures on which the eye could then have rested without distraction. The kneeling figure of the young king, Melchior, from whose head a black page is just removing the crown which in a moment will be laid amongst the starry flowers at the foot of the Madonna, while its young owner gazes with a rapt air at the young child whom he has come so far to see, is of the greatest beauty. It should be noted that this very figure is repeated, with slight modification and the addition of gorgeous wings, in the 'Announcing Angel' (carried out by Mainardi) in Sta. Maria Novella. The old Magus again, who, seen from behind, turns his head sideways, is repeated, with slight variation in the drapery—the original study for which is in the Uffizi—in other works by Ghirlandaio and his scholars. The identity of the two young men who kneel to the right is undetermined, nor is it known for whom or for what place this altar-piece was painted. Rumohr considers it to have been the picture executed for Orbetello,[1] while others think that it was painted for Giovanni Tornabuoni or some other private citizen of Florence. A replica, a good deal varied, and carried through mainly by his *bottega*, is to be found in the Pitti (No. 358), while a third variation, once in the Pandolfini Gallery, went to England some years ago.

Of far finer quality—indeed, of the very finest—is the altar-

[1] So too Milanesi.

Actuari *Innocenz*

THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI, 1488

piece of the same subject which is over the high altar of the church attached to the Innocenti (Plate XXVI.), the Foundling Hospital, made famous also by its Della Robbia *putti*, which all the world knows. The date of the picture is 1488, and, as we should have expected in such a place, has direct reference to the care of the children. The mother of Jesus sits enthroned—a queen this time, but a very gentle queen—and she wears the jewelled brooch at her throat of which we have several times spoken. Ghirlandaio has gone back here to his first ideal of the Madonna, but with more clear and firm expression of it; and it is purely a type here, and quite without portrait sense. Two of the kings kneel before her, one of them kissing the young child's foot, while the youngest, Melchior, at her right hand, stands holding his offering, his hand upon his hip, his long hair falling on his jewelled mantle. Domenico has created no more sympathetic figure than this Florentine boy in the beauty of his young manhood. On the right and left hand of the Virgin are other princely figures[1]: 'heads most beautiful, of various mien and feature, as well of young as of old,' says Vasari. Amongst them, behind Melchior, is one who by his turban and beard is probably a Greek humanist — perhaps Demetrius. Below, on the left, kneels the Baptist, and on the right, in a long green mantle, kneels St. Gallo wearing a halo, the patron saint of the original hospital. St. John and St. Gallo each tenderly present to the Virgin a little kneeling child in transparent draperies — '*innocenti*,' as their haloes proclaim — very sweet, true creations. Did Ghirlandaio study them from his own children? one wonders,—one sees that he knew a child. The whole picture, indeed, is full of the tenderest human sentiment, which is repeated and spiritualised, shown at once in the region of love divine and of love human, in the Mother and her divine Child. If ever one has too hastily joined in the cheap charge

[1] It is natural to suppose that the men who figure here would be likely to be those who were interested in, perhaps directors or guardians of, the hospital. A list of these officers for the year 1488 or thereabouts might help us with suggestions.

against Ghirlandaio that he had no religious feeling, one may lay it down here at the foot of this truly religious and truly human picture.

In the middle distance on the left is enacted the scene of the Massacre of the Innocents, while on the hill-top to the right the angel is announcing the Nativity to the shepherds. Behind the Virgin's canopy opens out Ghirlandaio's favourite river or estuary scene with the mountains on either side, this time all from Domenico's own hand, fading away in the distant haze. Towns, villages, and churches lie along the shore. One always wonders where Domenico saw those long and slender spires and blue slate roofs, which seem to speak of countries north of the Alps rather than of Tuscany. The vision of Rome on the left seems more to belong to Ghirlandaio's range of travel, not very like Rome to be sure, but containing the Colosseum, the Pyramid of Caius Sestius, and the Column of Trajan, lacking as yet its capping and the statue of Saint Peter which were to come to it in the sixteenth century. As a crown and consummation of the whole composition we have the chorus of angels above, who hold a scroll with the words 'Gloria in excelsis Deo.'[1]

It has seemed well to describe at some length these easel pictures, partly because of their intrinsic importance, and partly because of their bearing on the religious element in Domenico's Art. But space does not allow lengthened analysis of several other works which bear the name of Domenico Ghirlandaio and might seem to deserve, for this reason or for that, fuller examination. I must be content to notice the admirable portrait in the Louvre (1322) of the old man in the red doublet, looking down at a fair-haired boy; a work in which technique and feeling combine to give a charm to a subject which might easily have

[1] The Predella of this picture is proved by an existing document to have been executed by Bartolommeo di Giovanni, who has recently been re-christened 'Alunno di Domenico.' Mr. Berenson assigns the episode of the Massacre of the Innocents, in the left middle distance of the actual picture, to this same artist.

London, National Gallery (Lent by Mr. George Salting)

COSTANZA DEI MEDICI

been made almost repulsive from the ugliness of the kindly old sitter's features. Of more importance in Ghirlandaio's art is the small panel (21) in the Berlin Gallery, 'Judith and the Maid,' which for many years passed under the name of Mantegna, and was so accepted by Waagen, but has now been transferred to Domenico, to whom it would seem rightly to belong. It has been at some time much retouched, a process of minute stippling having been applied to it which has resulted in a slightly opaque and woolly texture of surface unlike to the transparent brilliance with which Domenico's panels at Florence make us familiar. It must have been originally a very choice little panel, and is still most interesting, presenting us with a phase of the painter's art which is unique among his preserved or recorded works. The figure of the maid in this little panel will at once bring us back to the Novella frescoes. She carries on her head her basket with its gruesome burden, with the same brisk gaiety, the same quaint alacrity as the fruit girl in that series and is perhaps a variant (turned in a different direction) of the same design. It is much to be lamented that our own National Gallery possesses only two works, Nos. 1299 and 1230, a portrait of a youth and a portrait of a girl, unimportant panels, neither of which inspires unreserved confidence as examples of the master, or can, even if their authenticity be accepted, stand as among the worthiest examples of his Art. On the other hand, the portrait in tempera on panel of Costanza dei Medici (Plate XXVII.), wife of Gian Francesco Gaetani, lent to the National Gallery by Mr. George Salting, is a work of no small charm. She wears a high-girt Florentine dress of rose colour, now much faded, and holds in her hand a small white flower, while on the sill on which she leans are strewn a few small jewels. Nothing can surpass the simple charm of the treatment. The face has no single feature which can be called beautiful. And yet, by virtue of the quiet sincerity of the presentment, and the sympathetic insight which the picture reveals, we find ourselves

fascinated more and more as we stand before it. Here, too, we have a picture which seems to have escaped serious re-touching; and though, on near examination, the tempera proves to be a mere network of cracks, we learn from it how much less fatal such a condition is than that which results from the brush of the restorer. The attribution, however, of this interesting work to Domenico Ghirlandaio, in the absence of documentary evidence, is not free from difficulty.

CHAPTER X

DOMENICO'S HOUSEHOLD AND WORKSHOP AFFAIRS

WHEN in 1480 Domenico's father, Thomas the Goldsmith, made return for income tax purposes of his possessions and his family, he described his eldest son Domenico as 'of no settled abode,' a description which merely implies that the young painter, absent in San Gimignano, Pisa, Lucca, Rome, was rarely to be found for long together in his father's home. But after the second Roman visit all this was to be altered, and in 1482 he married Costanza di Bartolommeo Nucci, who was the mother of his son Ridolfo, the painter, born February 4, 1483, and of two more children. She died in 1485, and he presently married Antonia di Ser Paolo Paoli. Domenico was the father of nine children, of whom three died in infancy. One of his sons became a monk, afterwards prior of the Angeli, under the name of Don Michelangelo. His daughter Antonia married Francesco di Simone the jeweller, and another daughter, Costanza, was the mother of Messer Guido, who became medico to Francis I. Vasari tells us all that we are to know of Domenico's household affairs. Domestic cares sat, he seems to say, heavily on the painter, who, full of the artist temperament, showed it—alas! in a fashion not unusual—by total inability to absorb himself in family duties. He was never known, we gather, to show any unwillingness to work at any commission great or small, thinking it the part of a true artist to hold nothing unworthy of Art, from the fresco of a palace wall to the ornamented basket of a peasant woman. But 'he troubled himself much when he had

family cares.' And for this he gave to David his brother (born 1454) all the burden of spending, saying, 'Leave work to me, and be thou the provider.'

It is clear enough from all that Vasari says that Domenico was a man loveable and loved. It is even clearer that David 'the good old man,' as Vasari calls him at a later day of his life, having little of his brother's genius, was the man of helpfulness and business and order, and the mainstay in that respect of the Ghirlandaio *bottega*. He became in after days the guardian of his dead brother's children, as in his lifetime he had watched over their family interests. With them too was associated the younger brother Benedetto (born 1458) who, to judge by his picture in the Louvre (No. 1323) 'The Road to Calvary,' was a painter of the meanest capacity. But though David as an independent painter hardly rises above a third rate or low second rate rank, and Benedetto hardly even so high, yet, working under the immediate eye and inspiration of Domenico, whom they sincerely admired and loyally aided, these men proved valuable and trusty assistants. Such men were indispensable to all who practised fresco on a large scale. There is very much in such work which, though it does not demand the hand of a great artist, yet demands the help of one who is thoroughly sound and thoroughly trustworthy: and, with Domenico's cartoons in their hand, and the unwearied Domenico himself working on the scaffold above or below, such men as Bastiano Mainardi of San Gimignano, who married Domenico's sister Alessandra, David and Benedetto were probably as useful and loyal a set of assistants as a great painter could desire.

In the latter years of Domenico's life his *bottega* was probably the most popular in Florence. Vasari gives us the names of a few of the best-known pupils; Niccolò Cieco, Jacopo del Tedesco, Jacopo dell' Indaco (afterwards employed by and friendly with Michelangelo), Baldino Baldinelli, Francesco Granacci, and Michelangelo Buonarroti—the last an immortality in itself.

On April 1, 1488, the father of Michelangelo, then thirteen years and one month old, signed the following memorandum: '1488, I record on this first day of April how I, Lodovico di Lionardo di Buonarrota, place Michelagnolo, my son, with Domenico and Davit di Tommaso di Currado for three years next to come; with these agreements and terms: that the said Michelagnolo must stay with the aforesaid the said time, and learn to paint and to practise the said exercise, and that which the aforesaid shall command him: and the said Davit and Domenico must give him in these three years twenty-four florins of salary; the first year six florins; the second year eight florins; the third ten florins; in all the sum of ninety-six lire.' This sum is stated by Heath Wilson to be, weight for weight, equivalent to £11, 10s., by Gotte and others to be £8, 12s.; of course the purchasing value would be far greater. It has been observed that here the apprentice is paid for his service rather than pays for his teaching. We do not know the custom of the *bottega* on this point, nor do we know the special condition of Michelangelo's maintenance—Lionardo's father lived at Settignano, and Michelangelo probably therefore had his board at home. It has been argued, however, that the payment on the part of Ghirlandaio implies that Domenico saw that Michelangelo's services would be worth much to him. It is very difficult to agree with this view—for even allowing that Michelangelo was a boy of the highest promise, and already showing great talent as a young draughtsman, he had as yet everything to learn of the technics of his craft, the use of colour, the methods of tempera and fresco, and many things besides, before he could be trusted on the walls of a church, or a panel for an altar-piece. It is far more probable, that if we knew the general conditions of such apprenticeship we should find that Michelangelo was taken in on much the same terms as other boys. He probably was set to learn what all learnt who entered a *bottega*; the grinding of colours; the mixing of the medium for tempera; the enlargement

of drawings by Domenico into cartoons by means of squaring; transference of cartoons to the wet plaster by pouncing or tracing, and all the work which belonged to the assistants. The year in which Michelangelo entered the *bottega* was a very busy one. It was the year of the Innocenti altar-piece, and one of the years of the Novella frescoes. Granacci and Michelangelo must have seen and learnt the process of fresco painting under very fortunate circumstances. It was owing probably to this fact, and to the admirable and safe methods followed by the brothers Ghirlandaio that years afterwards Michelangelo had little to learn of fresco painting, and entered fearlessly on his mighty task in the Sistine. But of the relations between the master and the boy Condivi has left an account which places Domenico in so painful a light, that a biographer is bound to examine it with more exactness than perhaps it deserves. Condivi states that Domenico, now at the height of his power and of his fame, was jealous of this boy of thirteen, refusing him all help, and denying to him the means of improving himself under his charge. Later writers have accepted this charge, and some have even improved upon it by connecting with it the fact that Michelangelo remained so short a time in the Ghirlandaio workshop. Domenico, according to this view, presently takes the opportunity to get rid of him and Granacci, when one year later Lorenzo dei Medici applied to him to recommend his best students for the Academy which Bertoldo was conducting under his patronage in the gardens near San Marco. Vasari, who gives a very different version of the matter, in order to refute this accusation, in his second edition published the agreement of Lodovico Buonarroti given above, in proof that Domenico acted liberally towards Michelangelo. It is needless to say that that was no refutation, and the matter remained and remains where Condivi and Vasari left it. That which has seemed to lend colour to the charge is that Michelangelo, who was alive when Condivi wrote his memoir, made, so far as we know, no effort to refute the charge against Domenico. But neither did

Domenico's descendants,[1] who presumably, since they were doubtless the chief source of Vasari's version, would have been very far from endorsing the charge. It must not be forgotten that in days when no newspapers or other channels of publicity existed, no means were open for putting a refutation on record short of writing a book. Refutation by word of mouth may have freely been used, but when Condivi and Vasari had ceased to print, no such refutation could very well reach us. The damaging statement of Condivi has to stand, but a very little examination of the probabilities of the case will show us that if the charge rests on no better substructure than his words, he has a very poor case.

He begins with the story that Michelangelo borrowed from Francesco Granacci (who, be it remembered, was two years younger than Michelangelo, that is to say, of the mature age of eleven) a print of the temptation of St. Antony by Martin Schongauer.[2] 'Michelangelo made a picture of it on wood, and helped by Granacci with the loan of colours and brushes, so composed and drew it that not only did it cause marvel to all who saw it, but even envy, as some would have it, to Domenico (the most prized painter of that age, as in other things afterwards one can tell) who to make the work less marvellous was wont to speak of it as having issued from his *bottega*.' Let us dissect this story. To fit the circumstances, this borrowing of the colours and brushes by the boy of thirteen from the boy of eleven, must have happened before either went to the Ghirlandaio *bottega*, at the time when Michelangelo's relations were doing all they could to hinder his taste for drawing, and naturally did not help him to colour and brushes. After his

[1] Domenico's eldest son Ridolfo, the painter, did not die till 1561. Condivi published his account in 1553.

[2] Vasari also tells the story of the copying of the print, but omits the jealousy of Domenico and the borrowing of the materials from Granacci. He gives a right description of the original painter, Martin Tedesco, while Condivi calls him Martino d'Olanda.

entry to the *bottega*, the supply of colour and brushes needed no borrowing, especially from a younger boy. Then we find Domenico, a proved artist of nearly forty, so carried away by this copy from Martin Schongauer as to become jealous of the boy of thirteen. Most artists of experience would allow even the best copy made by a pupil to pass unenvied till some great original drawing had given promise of real power. A copy, no matter how good, would never call forth any such forecast from a man of judgment such as Ghirlandaio. Moreover, we are asked to believe that Ghirlandaio began to feel the pangs of jealousy towards a boy who, to make the details fit, must have been under thirteen, and not yet in his *bottega*. He then takes the extraordinary course of declaring that the work came from his workshop to make it appear less wonderful, and to give colour to this wholly gratuitous act of jealousy towards the boy who so far had no connection with him, proceeds to take him and his accomplice of eleven years old or under into his workshop. Having presently ascertained, by various proofs, the great value of his new pupils, who should, with all his great works apparently before him, have seemed of the greatest utility to him, he allows them to spend their first 'prentice year, the year of little or no profit to the master, and of some loss of colours and materials, and then, in further development of his dastardly jealousy, gets rid of them by recommending them to Lorenzo dei Medici. And so he parts with his two best pupils. This is the story which has been built upon Condivi's statement. But to obtain further light upon the value of Condivi's testimony we must read a little further, especially as it concerns another member of the Ghirlandaio circle. 'Not only did he appear little courteous towards Michelangelo' (yet a little later he says that this latter praised Domenico both for his art and his manners) 'but also towards his own brother' (Benedetto), 'whom when he saw him going forward and giving great hopes of himself he sent into France, not so much for the advantage of Benedetto as that he himself might remain the first artist

in Florence.'[1] When Condivi wrote this wonderful corroboration of his views about Domenico, can he ever have seen any of the independent works of poor, ineffective Benedetto—the Louvre picture, for example? Benedetto, in danger of becoming the first artist in Florence (where Filippino Lippi, Sandro Botticelli, Lionardo da Vinci are in the flower of their age), is exiled to France by Domenico! If we are to believe, on Condivi's evidence, the charge as it concerns Michelangelo, we must also accept it as it concerns Benedetto. Let him do so to whom it seems good.

For myself, in spite of the silence of Michelangelo, the one damaging feature in the case, I can only regard the story of Condivi, repeated by Varchi, who was born after Ghirlandaio's death, as valueless and self-condemned. We have a right to reconstruct Ghirlandaio's action towards Michelangelo on lines which were honourable to himself as well as serviceable to his pupil. In the studio of Domenico Ghirlandaio, who was no money-seeker, no commission-hunter, but who lived absorbed in his art alone and ready to accept whatever task she imposed upon him, the boy Michelangelo had art set before him in its most honourable, least mercenary, most whole-hearted form. This was in itself very much, one may say it was most. In the technics of his art, Michelangelo saw there the practice only of methods which were safe, simple, and well tried, to the exclusion of enticing methods which offered more brilliancy but more danger. When in later days Michelangelo says that 'oil painting is fit only for children,' one hears perhaps in those words an echo of the Ghirlandaio workshop. Above all, he learned in the workshop of the man who longed to be allowed 'to be given all the walls of Florence to fresco' to love broad work, and to think of fresco as a thing which needed large handling and was fitted to express large thought. The large thought indeed — his own

[1] That Benedetto went to France and returned to Florence after a few years, prosperous and honoured, is stated by Vasari, who values his art at a low rate. At what exact period of his life this happened is not very clear—Benedetto helped to finish the altar-piece of Sta. Maria Novella in 1491. He died in 1497.

special form of large thought—he did not get from Ghirlandaio nor from any other man. The outlook of master and of pupil upon life and upon their art, as expressing that life, had little in common. Ghirlandaio sees and expresses life, it is true, through the human body, but it is the human body seen in its clothes and walking delicately. Michelangelo sees life through the human body as God gave it to Adam.

CHAPTER XI

THE FRESCOES OF SANTA MARIA NOVELLA

IT was convenient in the preceding chapter to refer to several works out of their order, such as the Uffizi tondo of 1487 and the Innocenti altar-piece of 1488. We must return now to the year 1485, when, on December 15, Ghirlandaio put the last touches to the Trinita frescoes. Already, on September 1 of that same year, there had been drawn up between Domenico and David on the one hand and Giovanni Tornabuoni on the other, a contract (see Appendix VI.) whereby the painters were to execute within the choir of Sta. Maria Novella a series of pictures illustrating the life of the Virgin Mary and the life of St. John Baptist—Giovanni's eponymous saint. The subjects and their particulars are set forth with extraordinary precision, but the manner of their representation, within certain limits, is left to Domenico,[1] who is described in the preamble as a '*providus ac discretus vir.*' They are to be executed in fresco and with ultramarine[2] wherever it is needed. Domenico and the Ghirlandaio firm were to receive 1100 gold florins, the work to be begun in May 1486 and finished in May 1490. Vasari says that there was an agreement that if the work proved pleasing to Giovanni Tornabuoni 200 ducats in addition should be paid. He adds that when the work was completed, Giovanni acknowledged that the 200 ducats were fairly earned, but prayed to be excused the payment,

[1] '*et omnia arma quæ voluerit et in qua parte voluerit dictus Johannes apponi et fingi, pingere ad suam liberam voluntatem et beneplacitum*, etc., etc.'

[2] '*posti in fresco, ut vulgariter dicitur, et cum azzurino ultramarino.*'

hoping that Ghirlandaio would be satisfied with the honour of his achievement, and that Ghirlandaio generously waived his claim. For the sake of the rich banker, one would wish to think this part of the story untrue, and it is noticeable that in the contract no mention occurs of this conditional extra payment.

The choir had already been painted by Andrea Orcagna with frescoes of these same subjects, whose perished remains still hung upon the walls. A defect in the roofing above the left hand wall, or possibly in the masonry itself, had caused the wall to be damp and had destroyed the frescoes on that side. It is to be noted that the defect never seems to have been permanently provided against, the damp of that wall, which looks externally towards the north, having reasserted itself, or else having never been thoroughly expelled, and similar ruin has overtaken the Ghirlandaio frescoes on the upper portion of that wall. The brief time that was to elapse before Domenico set hand to his painting, shows that no thorough rebuilding of the faulty wall could have taken place. The few months could only have sufficed for the removal of the earlier frescoes and the preparation of the walls for Domenico's work, and it is to be feared that the safeguards against future injury by damp were confined to the repairing of the roof. The lower portions of the wall, however, have suffered far less.

As helpers in this great undertaking, Domenico had his pupil and friend, who was later[1] to be his brother-in-law, Bastiano di Bartolo di Gimignano Mainardi, the most capable of all his assistants; his brother David; his brother Benedetto; perhaps his pupil Jacopo del Tedesco, who was of an age to be useful; perhaps, too, one or other of those other pupils, Niccolò Cieco, Jacopo dell' Indaco (who for a while was taken as an assistant in the Sistine by Michelangelo), and Baldino Baldinelli, the latter only at the end of the time, since he was only born in 1476. The

[1] Alessandra, Domenico's sister, was born in 1475. She could hardly, as some writers seem to take for granted, have been Mainardi's wife before the Novella frescoes were completed in 1490, even in a country of early marriages such as Italy.

two boys, Michelangelo and Granacci, for their one year of 1488, probably were made useful for odd jobs, perhaps allowed here and there even to try their hand on the wet plaster, where no harm could be done. But we cannot accept the suggestion that the boy Michelangelo could have possibly been the author of the nude beggar on the steps in the 'Expulsion of Joachim' (Plate XXVIII.). Such a work, whatever its shortcomings, by a boy of thirteen, would certainly have been bruited about, would certainly have reached Vasari's keen ear for charming gossip, and would have been too strong a weapon of attack to have been omitted by Condivi. From the story told by the latter, and by Vasari, of Domenico returning one day to the chapel and finding that the boy had made a drawing of astonishing excellence of a portion of the scaffolding—not without its value to him perhaps in later Sistine experiences—with its platforms and various painters and workmen at work, we rather infer that the boy's share in the work in Sta. Maria Novella was of a different kind, and left plenty of time on his hands.

It will be readily understood by any one who has given serious study to these frescoes, that it is not possible to make accurate partition of all portions of the work amongst the various artists and assistants employed upon it. On the evidences of style, we can say that certain of the subjects were entirely or almost entirely carried out by Domenico's own hand. In other cases it is equally safe to say that he had almost no hand in the execution, and we can even assign the bulk of the work to this or that assistant. But there is obviously much mixture, and here and there, in the midst of work which is that of the master himself, there occurs a passage which is quite evidently from a weaker hand. So, too, in the midst of work which evidently was left in the main to his assistants, we find a particular passage which seems to bear the stamp of the master's own hand. This is only what we should naturally expect. There must have been, as the work proceeded at irregular and unequal speed in this part or that, times when the hand of

some assistant was free from his immediate task, and would be at once given occupation on one of the other frescoes in progress. There would be times, too, when the master himself, waiting while the fresh intonaco was being laid, or the pouncing and tracing being carried out by his helpers, would have his hands free for a few hours to paint in a portrait head or two in the midst of his pupils' work; or he might naturally do this, and add a whole costume, merely to encourage his helpers, and to keep the work up to a standard, or to set the model of its tone and colour. No attempt, therefore, to assign these frescoes *en bloc* to this master or that, without such reserve as these considerations make necessary, can be satisfactory. What, however, we can say without fear is that the designs were Domenico's, and carried out under his eye and under his direction. The spirit in which the whole is conceived is wholly his, the execution of much of it is his. The work of his assistants is chiefly in evidence in the upper portions of the chapel, where they carried out a great portion of his designs. It would be impossible, in a book of this size, to examine critically and exhaustively the detail of the frescoes with a view to establishing the authorship of each separate portion. Nor is it possible, for the same reason, to go into the grounds on which one may assign this or that portion to any given hand. All that can be done is to state one's conclusions in somewhat general terms, in view of which end it will be well to give an exact list of the subjects as they occur on their respective walls, beginning in each case from below.

LEFT WALL.

Life of the Virgin Mary.

Lowest pair. 'Joachim driven from the Temple' (*l.*) 'Birth of the Virgin' (*r.*).
Middle pair. 'Presentation of the Virgin' (*l.*) 'Marriage of the Virgin' (*r.*).
Upper pair. 'Adoration of the Magi'[1] (*l.*) 'Massacre of the Innocents'[1] (*r.*).
Lunette above. 'Death and Assumption of the Virgin.'[1]

[1] These three subjects are seriously injured by damp and decay.

END WALL.

VARIOUS SUBJECTS: (THE WINDOW DIVIDING LEFT FROM RIGHT).

Lowest pair. 'Giovanni Tornabuoni Kneeling' (*l.*) 'Francesca di Luca Pitti Kneeling' (*r.*).
Middle pair. 'The Annunciation' (*l.*) 'St. John in the Desert' (*r.*).
Upper pair. 'St. Francis before the Soldan' (*l.*) 'Death of Peter Martyr' (*r.*)
Lunette. 'Coronation of the Virgin.'

RIGHT WALL.

LIFE OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST.

Lowest pair. 'Meeting of St. Mary and St. Elizabeth' (*l.*) 'Angel appearing to Zacharias' (*r.*).
Middle pair. 'Zacharias naming his Son John' (*l.*) 'Birth of St. John Baptist' (*r.*).
Upper pair. 'Baptism of Christ' (*l.*) 'Preaching of St. John' (*r.*).
Lunette. 'The Feast of Herod.'

VAULTING.

Four evangelists on blue ground with gold stars.

ALTAR-PIECE.

Removed in 1804; One half 'The Virgin in Glory with attendant Saints,' No. 1011, Munich Gallery. The other half 'The Resurrection,' No. 75, Berlin Gallery. The Predella dispersed and lost sight of.

Windows from Domenico's designs by Alessandro Fiorentino called Bidello. His true name was Alessandro (Sandro) di Giovanni di Andrea Agolanti, Maestro di Vetro.

I may explain that for several years past the frescoes, except the lower tier, have been hidden from view from below by scaffolding and tressels in three tiers erected with a view to deciding the question of restoring them. Up to the present year (1907) I believe that no final decision has been arrived at. It is much to be desired that only the same admirable method should be adopted as in the case of the Sistine ceiling a few years ago, wherein all retouching and repainting were rigorously excluded, and the work confined to making secure dangerous portions,

filling cracks, and cleaning away dust with bread. The three upper subjects on the left wall have perished to such an extent that to 'restore' them means to present us with a new picture by a different hand. Fragments and indeed large portions of great value may still be preserved and held safely in their places for many years to come; the rest has already passed away beyond recall. The opportunity thus afforded for examining the frescoes at close quarters has shown that in the upper portions there are many details which under no conditions of light can be seen from below. This will at once be charged against the work as a defect: and the charge is well founded with regard to the upper portions of the series. But the degree of miscalculation may be explained also by the fact that both before and while the painting was in progress the light came in from the whole window uninterrupted by stained glass. It had probably been more than sufficient for Orcagna's frescoes painted in a light key: sufficient, too, for the Ghirlandaio frescoes painted in a lower key, so long as the light, a north light, came in through white glass. The stained glass by Alessandro Fiorentino, a scholar of Domenico, was not put in till 1491 after the frescoes were completed. It renders some portions of the work practically invisible at almost any hour of the day.

Following the order of the preceding list, beginning always at the left hand subject in each pair, we find upon the left or west wall (the church runs north and south, the great window being north), the 'Life of the Virgin,' beginning with the 'Expulsion of Joachim from the Temple' (Plate XXVIII.), wholly from the hand of Domenico, with the exception of portions of the architecture, and the two girls bringing offerings of a lamb and doves in the right hand portion.[1] We are met here at once by the feature which will challenge us throughout the series, and that too, it must be admitted, to a greater extent than in any earlier

[1] Milanesi believes that Mainardi's hand is visible in the fresco. I incline to see some other assistant.

THE EXPULSION OF JOACHIM FROM THE TEMPLE

series by Domenico—namely, the weakness and unimpressiveness of the principal actors—the religious actors in the scenes—as compared with the force and reality of the groups of spectators or witnesses. It will be seen at once in this fresco that the two old men, who should be the leading interest, are conventional types clothed in the conventional classic garb, doing what they are set to do, but wholly yielding in interest to the two groups of living Florentines who appear at the two sides of the scene. In the left hand group, the young man fourth from the frame with his right arm akimbo, his head turned over his shoulder, is once more the young Lorenzo Tornabuoni, whom we saw as a boy of fourteen in the Sistine fresco, the eldest son of Giovanni Tornabuoni, the cousin of Lorenzo dei Medici. It was while these frescoes were in painting that he was married to Giovanna degli Albizzi in 1486. Florence of that day had no brighter figure amongst all its youth, and there was no greater favourite with the people on the day of the wedding feast in the Villa Lemmi. But when in 1497 the wretched Lamberto d'Antella, after torture, and with a promise of his life, wrote the names of five citizens, who, he said, had plotted for the return of the Medici, the mob, and others besides the mob, howled for his blood. It is interesting to remember that during these weeks of popular madness, Savonarola remained in his cell at San Marco, taking no share on either side. But when his own day of trial came, he answered the charge of sympathy with the plotters by saying that he had interceded for none of them save that he had said some few words to Francesco Valori in favour of the young Lorenzo Tornabuoni. Guilty or not guilty, but certainly not proved guilty, he died: and one wonders if the man behind him here may be his friend the young and brilliant Giannozzo Pucci who died with him. On the other side of the picture is a group of four men, of whom the man on the extreme right is Bastiano Mainardi: the young man without a hat, with the long dark hair and the left hand on the hip, is Domenico Ghirlandaio himself: the old man

next to him, whose head only is seen, is Tommaso the goldsmith, the painter's father (who had already been painted in the Trinita as Pietro Bernardone)—this face is wrongly stated by Vasari to be Alesso Baldovinetti. The sturdy figure in the round berretta, with his back turned and his legs a-straddle, is David Ghirlandaio.

The right-hand subject of the lower tier is the 'Birth of the Virgin Mary' (Plate XXIX.). If any single fresco of the series can claim to be wholly the work of Domenico it is this. With the exception of the 'Death of Saint Francis' in the Trinita, and the 'Calling of the First Apostles' in the Sistine, no work by Ghirlandaio can be put before this—and as expressing the special characteristics by which Ghirlandaio's art has come to be known, this fresco must claim the first place. Domenico himself seems to have been content to let this be the fresco which should bear his signature for the whole group. On one of the intarsia panels, which appears above St. Anne's bed, the word BIGHORDI may be read, and on the right hand panel GRILLANDAI —it is to be noted that this is a plural form to cover the work of all the brothers. Almost in the middle of the picture, two girls are busied with the newly-born baby: one of these is in the dress of a *Balia* or nurse: she looks down with a happy smile into its face while the other turns round to speak to the young girl, who stands in a dress of gold brocade, and is thought to be Lodovica Tornabuoni, the sister of Lorenzo. Four women, evidently portraits, follow behind her. On the right, where St. Anne is seen watching the group from the bed, a second nurse runs in to pour the water into the brass basin, her skirts and scarf all a-flutter with her haste. This figure has very much of the charm of Filippo Lippi's and Botticelli's similar figures; it is less trippingly dainty, and fascinating perhaps, but with more solid reality—exactly as we should expect from Ghirlandaio. This girl (Plate XXX.) is delightful in her womanly eagerness at her task, but she is a very practical helper, who plants a firm foot on the

Alinari *Sta. Maria Novella*

THE BIRTH OF THE VIRGIN MARY

Alinari *Sta. Maria Novella*

GROUP FROM THE BIRTH OF THE VIRGIN MARY

earth, in spite of her haste, holds her jug firmly in a strong pair of arms and pours the water well into the middle of the basin. She should be compared with Filippo's tripping damsel at Prato—from whom she claims descent—and again with Botticelli's far more fascinating but quite unpractical maid in the Sistine 'Sacrifice' fresco, who, even if she succeeds in keeping her draperies from blowing away, and her skirt from upsetting her, will never keep her bundle of faggots on her head. They are all related to one another, these delightful handmaids and fluttering angels and dancing Salomes of the painters of the Renaissance, but if any of them should have to be chosen for sound and cheerful domestic service, it would certainly be those of Ghirlandaio. The figure indeed becomes typical of the man and his temperament.

The rendering of the architecture of the room is only to be called consummate. I have spoken already, in dealing with the San Gimignano work, of Ghirlandaio's evident pleasure in grappling with the problems of lighting a room, with the contrast of the daylight coming from the outside amongst the cool shadows of an interior, and this fresco in that respect stands at the top of Ghirlandaio's art. Everywhere the values are observed as finely as a later Dutchman would have done it. The great arched passage, which leads out of the chamber, recedes not merely by linear perspective, but by atmospheric effect. Vasari especially mentions the painting of the sunlight coming in through the little square window.[1]

Above this pair in the middle tier we have (left) the 'Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple' (Plate XXXI.). This picture is mainly by Mainardi and David, but portions of the architecture, as for instance the pilaster on the right, show traces of a hand less capable than these. The two heads of boys seen small near the pillars are better work than the rest of the group, and they were

[1] I must notice that for some reason a photograph over-emphasises the whites of the bas-relief of the eight music-making *putti* who are thus brought into a prominence which is not true to the fresco.

painted at one sitting as the plaster shows. Possibly Domenico put these in. The figure of the Virgin, faulty in drawing, is certainly not by Domenico, and, being the central interest of the fresco, would, it is natural to suppose, have been in his hands if he had been in command of that particular fresco. The nearly nude beggar, sitting on the steps with his flask beside him, has been assigned by Crowe and Cavalcaselle to Domenico, by others to Mainardi, while recently the name of Michelangelo has been whispered. I have no hesitation in assigning it to Mainardi. The two small figures in the foreground are very difficult to explain on any theory whatever. They are, even if we regard them as very young boys, hopelessly out of proportion to the other figures, and they have not the appearance of quite young boys. It has been suggested that they are intended for scholars of the Ghirlandaio workshop, the painter of them following the primitive tradition whereby scholars about a master were represented of lesser size. But the cases are hardly parallel, and nothing of the kind occurs in any other work done by or under Domenico. I shall make a suggestion in a later page which supplies—not very satisfactorily—the only solution which I can think of.

The right-hand subject of the second tier, the 'Marriage of the Virgin' (Plate XXXII.) is again, in the main, the work of Mainardi, but once more the hand of a far less capable man appears in the quite impossible pair of girls in the left lower foreground—hard to say whether girls or children — who raise much the same question as the two undersized figures of the preceding fresco. And the three figures behind Joseph, in theatrical attitudes with grinning expressions, are inferior to Mainardi, and seem to belong to Benedetto Ghirlandaio. The Virgin herself has the type of profile which is seen in Mainardi's (attributed to Domenico) fresco of the 'Annunciation' at San Gimignano, and again in the same subject here a few feet away. The women on the left are capable work, and the head of the girl with long hair down her

Alinari *Sta. Maria Novella*

THE PRESENTATION OF THE VIRGIN MARY

Alinari *Sta. Maria Novella*

THE MARRIAGE OF THE VIRGIN MARY

back, second from the end, is good enough to be a piece put in by Domenico. None of the architecture in this subject was carried out by Domenico.

Above in the upper tier the left subject is the 'Adoration of the Magi,' so ruined that the main group can hardly now be distinguished at all. It seems to have in it a good deal of the handling of Mainardi, while the right-hand group, the 'Massacre of the Innocents,' seems to belong to David. It is again so ruined that the details of the piece cannot be fairly judged, but from a high point on the opposite platform of the scaffold—never visible now from below—it is possible to see such portions of the detail as remain uninjured, and also to form an opinion of the general movement of the work. And here it is, judging from what we see, more difficult to feel the enthusiasm which Vasari expresses. He says of it that 'of all the stories we have from Domenico, this is certainly the best,' and he describes the vivid realisation of the passions and the emotions of the terrible scene and the power of deep thought which the picture implies on the part of the painter. As a rule it is only when Vasari records his facts, and inserts something which documents so often prove to be inaccurate, that the student of to-day has reason to dispute with one whose instinct as a critic was in the main so good. But in this case it is not possible to look at the fresco without feeling that Vasari has allowed his love of excited action and his fondness for strong narrative to carry him away. The treatment leaves upon us the impression of a dislocated composition which is rather a series of isolated acts of ferocity distributed over the whole space, than a drama whose pity and terror concentrate themselves about a central movement. Grief amongst Southern nations expresses itself in far more visible and demonstrative form than amongst the peoples of the North, and there was cause enough, to be sure, for wild and clamorous grief that day; but the fury and contortions of the various pairs of combatants, soldiers and mothers, are, even when one makes this

allowance, rather theatrical than deep. Yet amongst the ruins of the fresco may be seen here and there a face of no small beauty, as well also as faces where grimace is made to do duty for anguish. That Domenico may here and there have inserted something from his own hand upon his design is possible, but the execution is in the main due to David, with some other, possibly Benedetto, as a helper.

The truth is that the subject which tradition had brought down from the days of Niccolò Pisano, and still more of Giovanni Pisano, as one demanding violent if not excessive movement, was quite unsuited to Domenico Ghirlandaio's special powers. Of orderly, restrained, well-balanced composition he was a master; of dignified figure in composed attitude also, and of the grave splendour of life in its prosperous, well-nurtured, richly-clad phases he was a master. But of strong passionate movement, of deep pain, of the acute suffering of the body or soul he was no master. There is no instance that I can think of before this subject in Sta. Maria Novella in which he has cared to treat a theme requiring a violent movement—I mean, of course, as a primary theme. I do not forget that the Massacre of the Innocents occurs in little in the Innocenti altar-piece.[1] But well-balanced repose, rather than masterly construction of intricate design through strong movement, is the keynote of his art where composition is concerned.

Above, in the great lunette, the 'Death and Assumption of the Virgin,' sadly ruined by the dampness of the wall, contains much work by David and very little by Domenico, except the beautiful though injured figure of the Virgin herself as she rises through the clouds and becomes therein the crown and consummation of all the great series of the left wall. In the foreground, her figure stretched at length upon her bier, brings us back to memories of San Gimignano, and to the later work of the

[1] Mr. Berenson believes the episode of the 'Massacre of the Innocents' in that picture to have been inserted by 'Alunno di Domenico.'

Trinita. Domenico repeatedly in the last series of his life, and quite candidly, goes back to the motives which had been with him in his art since his prentice days with Baldovinetti; 'Repeating himself' people call this. And whom else should we wish him to repeat? The dividing line between the preferences of an artist—that which make his individuality delightful—and the mannerisms—that which makes his individuality wearisome is a very narrow one. I do not think Ghirlandaio can fairly be charged with having overstepped it.

The end wall (North) has, in the lowest tier on either side of Alessandro Fiorentino's window, the kneeling figures of 'Giovanni Tornabuoni' on the left, and on the right of his wife 'Francesca,' daughter of Luca Pitti, who it will be remembered had died in Rome so far back as 1477, and lay at rest in the Minerva Church. They are by Domenico himself, but are sadly repainted in oil. Above in the middle tier is the 'Annunciation,' on the left of the window, by Mainardi. The angel with the gorgeous wings is of the type which is found in the San Gimignano Chapel of the Annunciation, painted in 1482. On the right side is 'St. John in the Desert,' perhaps the feeblest piece of work in the choir by one of the less capable of the assistants. It has been badly injured by ladders, by the fall of a scaffold-pole (apparently) a long time ago, and the deliberate driving of an iron stanchion into the body of the saint to support decorations, and by more recent carelessness. The upper tier has on the left 'St. Francis before the Soldan,' and on the right the 'Murder of St. Peter Martyr,' neither by Domenico himself, and in the lunette the 'Coronation of the Virgin,' all of them much defaced. The 'Coronation' is practically invisible from below except as a composition, in which respect it is very fine, the two lines of saints, the lower line straight, and the upper line in a perspective circle, producing an effect of great space and grandeur. Above this double row are the figures of the Saviour and the Virgin, now almost obliterated. But of the details of this fine composition,

and of the question of the execution. I must confess myself unable to speak with conviction in spite of the opportunity offered by the scaffold, having been overtaken by fits of giddiness on that narrow and unguarded platform. The composition is, like that of all the rest (unless the 'St. John in the Desert' below, and the 'St. Peter Martyr' and 'St. Francis' be exceptions) by Domenico, and is the ancestor, perhaps, through Fra Bartolommeo's (1498), of Raphael's early fresco (1505) in San Severo, which he painted soon after his first visit to Florence; and later of the 'Disputa del Sacramento' in the Vatican.

Turning to the right or East wall of the choir, the lower tier begins on the left with the 'Salutation,' or 'Visitation of Elizabeth to Mary' (Plate XXXIII.), in which, save for the retouches of a restorer at some past period, I am able to recognise no hand but Domenico's. Here, as in the 'Birth of the Virgin' and the 'Birth of St. John,' all the persons actually present at and in view of the scene are women, although in this fresco two or three men with their backs turned are allowed to be present looking over the battlements, and a male figure is seen ascending the steps below, but out of sight of Mary and Elizabeth, who in the centre of the picture are screened from view by a wall, seen in perspective, which divides off the picture at about one-third of the length from the end, and makes, in point of composition, one of the most remarkable expedients in the range of Italian painting. The purpose of this strange and at first sight unmeaning introduction does not become plain until the wall has been mentally removed. It is then seen that it was necessary to contradict and break up the long monotonous double lines formed by the heads of the figures and by the long horizontal of the battlement which would otherwise have been intolerable. Over the long wall in question is seen the spire of Santa Maria Novella itself and the roof of the church, while, down on the left, steps descend to a town showing one of the old gates, probably of Florence itself. In the distance is a range of mountains in which Domenico once more

shows his capacity for atmospheric effect, while the silvery grey sky is broken up by trees whose drawing, in its attempt to give the feeling of rotundity rather than mere flatness, is in advance of that of any master of the fifteenth century, and carries on with greater achievement the noble endeavour of Piero della Francesca. This effort at the true representation of modelling of a tree does not cause the painter to lose sight of their mere decorative value where the leaves along the edges strike the open sky.[1]

The groups of women in this picture are the most beautiful that Ghirlandaio painted—we can only feel how great is our loss in having no sure clue to their identity, save in one case. Mothers and daughters of the houses of Tornabuoni and Tornaquinci, perhaps also of the Medici, they have left us no record of their names. Those who could have opened for us the door of that secret went away and took with them the key. One only, the stately, upright girl in the gold brocade, with the crimson-slashed sleeve, who holds her kerchief before her, is known to us. She is the young Giovanna degli Albizzi (Plate XXXIV.), who at about this time, shortly before or shortly after the painting of this picture, became in 1486 the bride of the ill-fated Lorenzo Tornabuoni. Vasari gives her name as Ginevra dei Benci, the well-known Florentine beauty. But that lady had died so far back as 1473, the wife of Luigi Nicolini, and though the introduction of portraits of those who are dead is by no means unknown, there is no reason known to us why Ginevra should be introduced amongst the 'witnesses' in these frescoes. Moreover, the identity of the lady in this fresco is established by comparison with a medal by Niccolò Fiorentino.[2] Botticelli's fresco in the Villa Lemmi, where

[1] These trees should be compared with the work of Perugino, Pinturicchio, and Raphael in order that the reader may assure himself that the claim here made on Ghirlandaio's behalf is not overstated. Piero della Francesca's trees in the 'Baptism' of the National Gallery should also be examined.

[2] This medal will be found figured in Plate xxiv. of Italian Medals, by Cornelius von Fabriczy (Duckworth and Co., 1904). The same plate contains Niccolò's medal of her husband, Lorenzo Tornabuoni.

she was married, will be found on the stairs of the Louvre. Giovanna's portrait there hardly seems to agree fully with Ghirlandaio's, but the medal appears to be conclusive evidence. There is also another portrait on panel (Frontispiece) by Ghirlandaio which, once in the Palazzo Pandolfini in Florence, came to the hands of Mr. Henry Willett of Brighton, and passed thence to the Kann Collection in Paris. It is now owned by Mr. J. Pierpont Morgan. Who the ladies were who follow her we cannot say—perhaps her mother, the wife of Maso degli Albizzi, and her sister. The younger lady bears a near resemblance to Botticelli's portrait of Giovanna of the Villa Lemmi.

In the middle of the picture, St. Elizabeth, wearing the simple white coif of a Florentine matron, meets the Virgin. Nothing more full of human tenderness and feeling will be found in the whole range of Ghirlandaio's art. Neither face is beautiful by the accepted canons of beauty. Both are beautiful with the beauty which the deepest human feelings leave upon the face of man or woman. The charge has often been brought, and I once more quote it in its baldest form from a popular description of Ghirlandaio's frescoes, that 'Ghirlandaio used sacred scenes as an excuse for portrait painting.' I have tried to show, in dealing with the Sistine frescoes, that such a sweeping view ignores the historical continuity of the religious element in Renaissance painting. We have seen many times in the course of Domenico's art that his strong power of portraiture, his sense of the sumptuous beauty of the Florentine life about him, were altogether out of proportion to his intuition of any spiritual fact. He was no mystic: no dreamer of beautiful dreams: no seer of visions. His feet were planted very firmly on the earth, but it was no sordid earth, no unworthy earth, but one made very beautiful by human affections and human sympathies. That is the form which his religion took, and in which it must be looked for, and in which it will be found. Ask him to paint you an 'Annunciation,' he may somewhat disappoint you; ask him to paint you a 'Last

THE SALUTATION OF ST. ELISABETH

Sta. Maria Novella

Alinari *Sta. Maria Novella*

GIOVANNA DEGLI ALBIZZI

Supper,' he will fail to satisfy you; ask him to paint you a 'Crucifixion,' and he will abstain. There is no instance that I can remember of this subject from his hand; but ask him to paint you a 'Nativity,' and he will give you something that will make you feel the birthday joy. I find much true reverence in this man, and of a humble, not of an ostentatious, kind. He does not choose deep spiritual truths to paint. He seems to know his limitations and to avoid that which is outside of them. There is no choosing of sacred subjects as an excuse. When a Sassetti or a Tornabuoni ask that their family chapel, where perhaps they hope to lie, may carry scenes from the life of the saint under whose name they live, Ghirlandaio sees for them and tries to explain for them the union of their family lives with that of their saint. He is as much painting for them the sacred fact brought into their daily lives as Rembrandt when he, quite reverently and with homely pathos, paints the Virgin and her child under the guise of a Dutch mother in a Dutch cottage. Rembrandt paints his Dutch mother as she dressed and worked in her own cottage in his day. Ghirlandaio paints his Florentine ladies as they dressed and lived in sight of their palaces of his day. For one and for the other there is the Mother and her Child close by to see and to think about.

And in this scene of the 'Salutation of Elizabeth to Mary' the deep human tenderness of the scene brings it within the range of Ghirlandaio's religious feeling, and shows him at his best. 'Excuse for portrait painting!' Even with Giovanna Albizzi standing by, who can call the two central figures with their infinite pathetic expression of woman's yearnings an excuse for Giovanna's fair tresses and rich brocade? I shall not, as we come to them, weary the reader by applying the same test to the other subjects—I shall here admit that few answer the test so well as this,—but I will ask him or her to look always first at the central scene—it is not fair to do otherwise—and to see how Ghirlandaio has tried to make his subject find its centre there.

It is not always to his reproach if he gave us his Florentines so much as they were, that we, being ourselves perhaps more interested in dresses than in the lives of saints, insist on looking at the dresses and complain of Ghirlandaio for putting them there.

The right-hand lower fresco, the 'Angel appearing to Zacharias in the Temple' (Plate XXXV.), is again directly from the hand of Domenico himself and full of his characteristics. I would first notice how the composition follows, with modifications, the same principles which we found in examination of the funeral scenes at San Gimignano and the Trinita. The interest of this picture is greatly enhanced to us by the fact that in 1561 Tornaquinci took down from the dictation of Benedetto di Luca Landucci an exact list of the persons represented, which, to avoid the necessity of a long description, I append here, adding a few notes which may be of interest.

LIST COMPILED BY BENEDETTO DI LUCA LANDUCCI AT THE AGE OF EIGHTY-NINE, WHO HAD KNOWN THE PERSONS REPRESENTED WHILE THEY WERE ALIVE.

(1) Giovanni Tornabuoni, uncle of Lorenzo dei Medici, Gonfaloniere of Florence, 1482.
(2) Pietro Popoleschi, Gonfaloniere of Florence, 1498. Took an active part in Savonarola's trial.
(3) Girolamo Giachinotti.
(4) Leonardo di Francesco di Messer Simone Tornabuoni, brother of Giovanni.

All these four at the side of the angel, caps on head, to the left.

(5) Messer Giuliano Tornabuoni.
(6) Giovanni di Francesco di Vieri Tornaquinci.
(7) Gian Francesco Tornabuoni.

These three at the side of Zacharias.

(8) Girolamo Tornabuoni, *alias* Scarabotto.
(9) Messer Simone di Piero di Francesco Tornabuoni.

These last two with bare heads on the right side behind.

Alinari — *Sta. Maria Novella*

ZACHARIAS AND THE ANGEL

Alinari — *Sta. Maria Novella*

ZACHARIAS NAMES HIS SON JOHN

(10) Giovanni Battista Tornabuoni.
(11) Messer Luigi Tornabuoni.
(12) Vieri (or Tieri) di Francesco di Vieri Tornaquinci (bareheaded).
(13) A priest of San Lorenzo, a musician.
(14) Benedetto Dei, jester, author of a manuscript chronicle.

These five form the group at the bottom of the composition on the right.

(15) Messer Cristoforo Landini, Humanist, author of many books, commentator of Dante, member of the Platonic Academy.
(16) Messer Angelo Ambrogini da Monte-Pulciano, called Poliziano, poet, Humanist. Tutor to the sons of Lorenzo dei Medici. Became, in his last days, a follower of Savonarola. Died 1494. Buried in the Dominican habit, near Pico della Mirandola and Benivieni the poet, in the cloister of San Marco.
(17) Marsilio Ficino, son of a doctor at Florence. Humanist. President of the Platonic Academy, which met in Lorenzo's villa at Careggi. Author of many books and translations. Became an adherent of Savonarola, but after the latter's death attacked his memory fiercely.
(18) Gentile dei Becchi, Bishop of Arezzo (not Demetrius the Greek, as Vasari says).

These four seen half-length below on the left.

(19) Federigo Sassetti,
(20) Andrea dei Medici,
(21) Gianfrancesco Ridolfi,
} members of the Medici Bank.

These three last seen half-length on the left. The girls on the right probably daughters of the Tornabuoni or Tornaquinci families.

When we go to the middle tier, the first fresco on the left represents the episode of 'Zacharias giving the name of John to his Son' (Plate XXXVI.). An old man behind him is remonstrating 'there is none of thy kinsfolk or acquaintance that is called by this name.' Zacharias has taken his tablets, and, with a determined look, is writing—'His name is John.'

In this fresco most of the work is carried out by Domenico, all the foreground figures by him, another hand only being visible in portions of the architecture and in the landscape seen through the arches. The left-hand portion of this picture, lying in the shadow of the back wall, is hard to see in most lights, but it contains

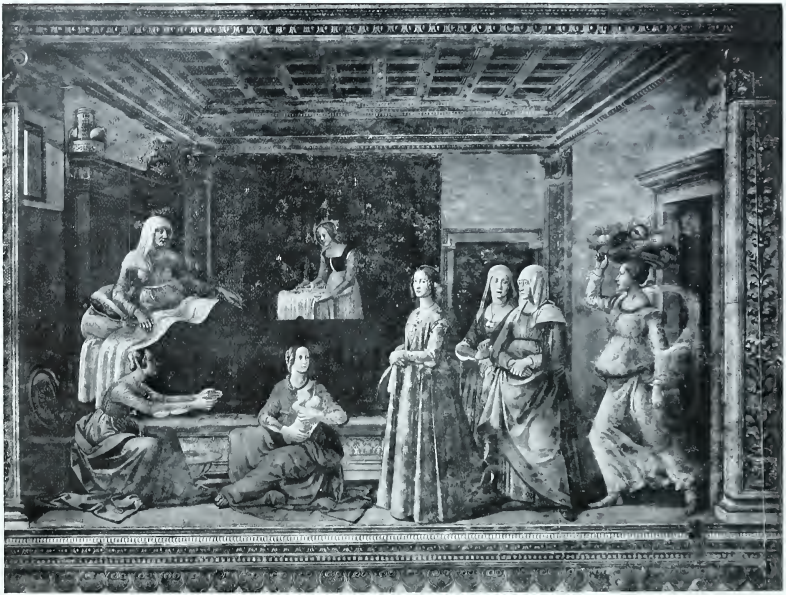
figures of great interest which have not, I think, received due attention.

The figure of the man on the left of the foreground group, in a crimson berretta and a long dark robe, wearing a short shoulder-cape trimmed with old-gold-coloured velvet or short fur, and holding his right hand on his hip, is, I think, a portrait of Lorenzo dei Medici, not at the time of the painting, but carried back to a much earlier date. For Lorenzo in the years 1486 to 1490 was a man of thirty-seven to forty-one years old, and this portrait is that of a man between twenty and thirty. He has Lorenzo's features—which were not so unpleasing in his early youth as they became before he died—here no doubt presented at their best and slightly idealised : he has the long, snaky dark brown ringlets, and the lines, not yet hardened, about the mouth and chin. In front of him stands a man in a riding-cap and cloak of pale mauve, wearing a yellow scarf and yellow riding-boots. His carefully curled ringlets and his almost foppish costume belong to the young Florentine of the day.[1] He looks down at the child and holds up the finger of the right hand as if to add his assent to the name. He is, I think, meant to be a sponsor. Now, I am strongly inclined to believe that this scene of the naming of San Giovanni Battista has for its second signification and import a reference to the naming (baptism in his case) of Giovanni dei Medici (afterwards Leo x.), third son of Lorenzo dei Medici. Giovanni was born on December 11, 1475, at which time his father, Lorenzo, was a man of twenty-six—an age which suits this portrait well. But who is the handsome young '*compare*'—the sponsor? He seems to be a Medici, but his identity—if my conjecture is right—could only be determined by the discovery

[1] Botticelli has a very similar figure in very nearly the same attitude and costume—even to the colour—in his 'Adoration of the Magi' in the Uffizi, which is of course full of Medici portraits. And at Cerreto-Guidi in Valdarno, where the Medici had an important villa, the baptismal font in San Lionardo Church, from the *bottega* of Giovanni della Robbia (1511), has two scenes, the 'Naming of St. John,' and the 'Nativity,' which are copied directly from the Novella frescoes. The naming sponsor is reproduced, and so are the two girls in the 'Nativity,' whom I have above suggested as girls of the Medici family.

Alinari

MEDICI FIGURES (DETAIL OF FRESCO)



Alinari

Sat. Maria Novella

THE BIRTH OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST

of the registry of Giovanni's baptism. It is thought[1] that the name of Giovanni was given to Lorenzo's son after that of Giovanni Tornabuoni, Lorenzo's uncle. In that case we should naturally expect Giovanni Tornabuoni to be amongst the witnesses of this scene. But his absence may, I think, be explained. He has already been twice represented in the series, once kneeling as donor of it all, and once in the great group of notabilities below. And it does not seem to have been the custom to represent the same living person twice over in the actual subject frescoes of a series.

Who is the young Florentine lady who holds the child, presumably the godmother, and the other behind Zacharias with her hands folded? Possibly Lorenzo's sisters, Bianca and Nonnina, but here again we might find suggestion in the baptismal register of San Giovanni Baptistry.

The right-hand fresco of the middle tier represents the 'Birth of the Baptist' (Plate XXXVIII.), the last which we can describe as coming mainly from Domenico's own hand. The surface of this fresco has been in parts, especially in the curtain at the back of the bed and in other portions of the wall, badly scratched and at some time repaired, so that we are deprived of a fair opportunity for comparing its lighting with that of the scene in the 'Life of the Virgin.' The daylight from outside is in this case introduced from the left through the square window, and breaks in upon the low, diffused light of the chamber itself. The composition has a good deal in common with that of the Santa Fina death-scene, both depending upon parallel horizontal lines contradicted by the perspective lines of the architecture of the room. The persons present are all women, but this time we are wholly without means of identification. The beautiful figure of the girl (Plate XXXIX.) in the white-and-gold dress, with the braided hair, is one of the most dignified of Ghirlandaio's creations. He has reserved for her the utmost power of his pencil, the simplicity of all the other dresses

[1] See Roscoe, *Leo X.*

acting as a telling foil to the beauty rather than sumptuousness of her robes. She stands, stately and tall, almost majestic; and she has, I suspect for most of us, long stood in our minds as the type of noble Florentine maidenhood in an age which set its chief store in the beauty of life. The girl who comes hastily in to bring the birthday offerings of fruit and wine fills the place of the servant-girl in the 'Birth of the Virgin,' and is of the same spirit, but not on the same lines. The figure here is comparatively clumsy, whereas the figure in the other fresco is merely sturdy and active, with a certain taking alacrity of movement. This figure of the girl carrying the fruit can hardly have been carried out by Domenico himself, but has rather been inserted by Mainardi. Not only is the somewhat more lifeless handling in favour of this view, but the faulty drawing from the knee to the foot points in the same direction. There is much fine painting of detail throughout this fresco. The wonderful rendering of the glass on the tray which the other girl is bringing to the bedside reminds one that Ghirlandaio, when he was of that mind, had no rival in such work.

The upper tier has upon the left the 'Baptism of Christ' (Plate XL.), carried out by Mainardi—a very fine composition in which the central action of the piece, the actual baptism, is so distinctly founded on Verrocchio's celebrated picture as to be an important evidence of his admiration for the great master, at whose feet he and other Florentines of the day were content to learn. The right-hand fresco of the 'Preaching of St. John' has the work of David added to that of Mainardi—the two figures to the right of the Rabbi and the old man with the folded arms belonging to David, while two heads seen between the two are very beautiful insertions by Domenico. When viewed from a high position it will be found that these two frescoes, as well as the 'Dance of Salome' above, are full of details, expressions of face, and minor refinements, which are invisible below. To take one example: the self-opinionated air of the old man with the folded arms is

Alinari *Sta. Maria Novella*

FLORENTINE LADY
(DETAIL OF FRESCO)

Alinari

Sta. Maria Novella

THE BAPTISM OF OUR LORD

finely expressed, but wholly lost from below. Again, the composition in the preaching scene is crowded and complicated, and it is, from the point whence they were meant to be seen, often impossible to extricate some figure which, when viewed from a near distance, is well worth dwelling upon. Nowhere is this fault more noticeable, however, than in the finest scene of all, the 'Dance of Salome at the Feast of Herod,' which David and Mainardi seem to have carried out between them, though the hand of Domenico may here and there have helped them out with a face among the groups which crowd the scene. This fresco is painted as if it were made to be seen down low and close to the eye, in which case it would, in spite of the hardness and woodenness of much of its drawing, have been greatly a gainer. The architectural perspective, it may be noticed, is of a high order.

Before passing away from this great series of frescoes so typical of Ghirlandaio's Art, and through him so typical of Florence in the full bloom of her Renaissance day, it may be interesting to add a few lines on some purely technical matters connected with fresco. The process of fresco-painting is probably so well understood by all who will read this book as to need re-stating merely in its most simplified form. On a wall well built and thoroughly dry (would that the conditions had always been observed!) a ground of ordinary plaster is laid. On the day when the painter is to do his work, a facing of finer and more specially prepared plaster, enough for the day's work, is smoothly laid, and on this fresh surface, still wet, '*intonaco fresco*,' the colour mixed with water only (in the simplest and safest practice of the art) is laid. The design is generally transferred from the painter's cartoon by 'pouncing,' that is to say, dusting powdered colour through holes pricked all along the edge, or by styling with a stylus or tracer. In any case the outline thus produced has generally to be reinforced by rapid deepening with the stylus or tracer on the wet plaster. The colour thus laid is locked up with the wet plaster and dries with it and in it. Touching in tempera colour afterwards is possible, and is

called painting '*al secco*.' The quality, however, in this case is different from the true fresco, and harder, more stippled, and more wiry. Since true fresco-painting can only be done while the plaster is wet, it stands to reason that at the end of a day's work what is left over unpainted has to be cut away and fresh *intonaco* joined up to the work next morning. This fact enables one very often, by examination at close quarters, to trace the speed at which the artist worked. A few results thus obtained may be of interest.

In the subject of the 'Angel appearing to Zacharias' the head and scarf of Giovanni Tornabuoni were put in in one day. The drapery of that figure, together with one head in the lower group, seem to have been done together in another day, as there is no division visible, and the incised lines run down quite uninterrupted. (All the heads in that same lower group which has Poliziano in it have been retouched in oil.) The head and neck to the dress of Giovanna degli Albizzi was one sitting. The indicating lines throughout the frescoes are not numerous, and in very many cases the painter has disregarded them, going inside or outside of them, and slightly altering his outline at pleasure. Thus, in the 'Salutation,' the incised line for the head of St. Elizabeth is visible outside the outline which Ghirlandaio actually painted, while the head of St. Mary was larger in the originally incised lines. The Lodovica Tornabuoni in the 'Birth of the Virgin' took three sittings, the head as far as the dress, one; the dress to below the arms, where they fold across, another; the remainder of the dress, a third. As a rule the heads are generally surrounded by the mark which tells of the cutting of the superfluous plaster after the day's work, but this is not always so. In this same scene, the birth of the Virgin, the two heads of the girls behind Lodovica were completed in the same day down to the junction of the neck with the dress. These are two very surely and simply modelled faces, and they are not so elaborate in ornament as Lodovica. The head of the old woman here with the white coif who faces the spectator was finished in a

sitting, and so also the woman behind her. There has been much retouching '*al secco*' here. In the group of four which contains his own portrait, Mainardi's head and his own were the work of a day, and his father's portrait with David's occupied another. The frequency with which the cutting-away mark surrounds a head only suggests to us how very easy it was for the work of the master to be inserted amidst the work of the scholars and *vice versâ*. Thus, close to these four fine heads there is some very poor scholars' work in the detail, and a little way off the girl carrying the lamb has very weak painting in it, the hands especially being very inferior, though it is fair to say they have been retouched.

The frescoes were completed in May 1490, at the end of the stipulated four years, and then followed the episode of the payment. In the following year Alessandro Fiorentino completed the stained windows from the designs of Ghirlandaio, and not, as sometimes stated, from those of Filippino Lippi. But the altar-piece, which stood where the present unsightly high altar is placed, remained unfinished, Vasari tells us, at Ghirlandaio's death, which happened on January 11, 1494. This is a very significant fact. To it must be added the further fact that the 'Visitation' panel, now in the Louvre (No. 1321), painted in 1491, was also carried out, not by Domenico himself, but by David and probably Mainardi, and that no more completed work came from Ghirlandaio's hand after 1490. We are led to suppose that Domenico broke down in health after the completion of the Novella frescoes. And this is borne out by a document recording the payment of 100 ducats to Domenico by Tornabuoni, because of the affection and good faith he had always shown to Tornabuoni, and because of his illness. It seems certain that after his recent achievement, and with commissions coming in more thickly than ever, this indefatigable worker would have not spent the remaining years of his life in idleness if he had been granted his health. And here I suggest a possible explanation of the occurrence of one or two

strikingly inferior passages in the frescoes themselves—notably the two undersized figures in the 'Expulsion' scene. I suggest that possibly his health was breaking down or broken down before the frescoes were actually out of hand, and that, his supervision failing to be as strict as before, work by pupils was passed both in this and the next fresco to the right (possibly the last pair executed), which would not have been there under other circumstances. Weak work by pupils may indeed be found in many parts of the frescoes, but here in the very foreground of the most important and most visible of the frescoes I can find no explanation for its presence in so conspicuous a form, except the belief that it was added when the master-hand and master-eye were no longer present.

With regard to the discarded altar-piece, which stood in its place till the year 1804, when it was removed to make room for a work by Sabatello ('*in pessimo gusto*,' says the recorder of the transaction), the portions of it are to be found in No. 1011, Munich Gallery, and No. 75, Berlin Gallery. The Berlin Gallery (Nos. 74-76), also has the two wings of the picture panels in oil (which Ghirlandaio never used), while the large panel is in tempera. These two wings, which represent 'St. Vincentius Ferrerius' and 'St. Antoninus'[1] (both fifteenth century Dominicans), belonged to the back of the altar-piece, while two others at Munich (1012-1013), 'St. Lawrence' and 'St. Catherine of Siena,' belong to the front portion. The large panel at Munich represents the 'Virgin in Glory, with St. Michael, St. Dominic, St. John Baptist, and St. John the Evangelist' (Plate XLI.). Although in this composition there is much, especially in the upper portion, which is finished by other hands, and though the colour in its last stages was due to his helpers, there is still much in the picture which Domenico himself must have carried near to completion before he laid his brushes aside. The St. Michael is a beautiful young figure which carries us back to the Melchior of the Inno-

[1] Vasari states that the 'St. Antoninus' (Berlin) and the 'Sta. Caterina' (Munich) were by Granacci, Jacopo del Tedesco, and Benedetto.

Hanfstaengl *Munich*

THE MADONNA IN GLORY WITH SAINTS

Manuel *Louvre*

THE SALUTATION OF ST. ELISABETH

centi. It is, perhaps, the last thing to which the master put his hand. But the folds of the drapery of the St. John are hard and sharp, and the angels of the upper portion are wholly by another hand. So, too, the face of the Madonna never came from Domenico himself. The two wings of this portion of the altar-piece are by Mainardi, and are fine examples of the master.

The 'Resurrection' at Berlin, which formed the reverse of the altar, is attributed by Vasari to Benedetto, and probably rightly. It is far inferior to the Munich panel, and we recognise in the sleeping guards the same wooden and theatrical figures which we find in the 'Road to Calvary,' No. 1323 of the Louvre. The wings of this reverse are, as I have said, also in the Berlin Gallery, and belong to Granacci, being probably added somewhat later. They are in oil, whereas both main panels and the Munich wings are in tempera.

The 'Meeting of St. Elizabeth and St. Mary,' No. 1321, in the Louvre (Plate XLII.), was painted in 1491 on the commission of Lorenzo Tornabuoni for his chapel in Sta. Maria Maddalena dei Pazzi, and is the work of David and Mainardi on the design of Domenico. The Virgin stands to the left in a blue robe fastened with the familiar brooch of one large carbuncle set with great pearls. St. Elizabeth kneels on the right in a yellow robe with disagreeable shot lights and colours. On the left is a Sta. Maria Jacobi, and on the right Sta. Maria Salome, the names being written above. Through the open arch in the centre we see a seaport town, and the ornamental frieze of the architecture is formed of shell-shaped ornament, set about with pearls—a return to that doubtful form of decoration which Domenico seemed to have left behind long ago in his early Uffizi 'Madonna in Glory.' The design of the Louvre picture is far finer than its colour, which is disagreeable and unharmonious, but the treatment of the subject, if once we can forget its colour as we look at it, enables us to read into it our memories of the tender human touch of the Novella 'Saluta-

tion,' and to see our old Domenico under the paint of our dull but kindly David.

The very fact that in these last three works put forth from the joint Ghirlandaio *bottega*, the work of Mainardi, of Benedetto, of David, is primary, while that of Domenico is little to be seen, tells plainly of the failing hand and failing energy of the great master, for so I think we must call him. It is eloquent, too, of another often recurring phenomenon in art — namely, that second-rate artists such as David and Benedetto will, when they work with and under a strong master such as Domenico, produce work of a high quality at times approaching to the first-rate. But when that influence is removed or weakened, and they attempt work more upon their own account, the second-rate that is in them at once asserts itself. In thinking of Ghirlandaio we must close his work with the great frescoes from his own hand in Santa Maria Novella, and think of the panels of Paris and Berlin and Munich as the echoes of a voice that was still.

The end came on January 11, 1494, when, after four days of illness, Domenico Ghirlandaio died in his home at Florence. There was fear of the pest in Florence in those days, and the mere whisper of fever was enough. The painter must not be buried, said the authorities, in daylight, and so that night, with his wife Antonia, David and Benedetto, and Mainardi, and perhaps the little Ridolfo, as mourners, they laid him to his rest where it was fittest for him to lie, in the church of Santa Maria Novella, where no monument marks his grave, but where the great frescoes above write for him their eternal *circumspice*.

CHAPTER XII

DAVID—BENEDETTO—RIDOLFO

DOMENICO died, as we have seen, on January 11, 1494. His widow, Antonia of San Gimignano, did not long survive him. He had left six surviving children of the two marriages. Of these Ridolfo, born in 1483, is the painter. Bartolommeo, an astronomer, became a monk, and was prior of the Angeli in 1522. Antonio also became a monk in the same cloister under the name of Don Michelangelo. One daughter, Costanza, married Giuliano di Guido, and their son became physician to Francis I., while Antonia married Francesco di Baldini the jeweller. All these children appear to have been committed to the guardianship of David, though Gaye says that in 1498 Benedetto was already *in loco patris*. This must surely be a misprint for 1493, since Benedetto died at the age of thirty-nine in 1497. In 1493 Domenico was still alive, but perhaps unable to give due care to his children, and since we know that in that year David was engaged on the mosaics of Siena, it is possible that in his absence Benedetto undertook the charge. David, who was deeply devoted to his brother, became presently the guide and helper of Ridolfo in his career as an artist.

David himself was an artist of no great capacity. We have seen reason to suggest in an early chapter that he was, like his elder brother, a pupil of Baldovinetti, then counted the chief master of mosaic in Florence. David indeed reckoned himself rather a mosaicist than a painter. He executed a mosaic for the

church of the Servi in Florence. In the Hotel Cluny, Paris, is preserved a 'Madonna and Child amidst Angels' in mosaic signed and dated in 1496; and in 1492 he had worked upon the façade of Orvieto, where, according to Milanesi, he designed 'a subject in mosaic for that magnificent temple.' And records also are found of payments made for repairs to already existing mosaics. On April 22, 1493, he undertook a contract to work on the mosaics of the façade of Siena. The part mentioned is the space above the central door and the two minor portals, and the expression used is, according to Milanesi, *di fare di musaico quella parte di facciata*. But whether this implies the creation of a wholly new mosaic, or the repair of what was already there, is not quite clear. Since the work was completed and paid (845 lire) about the end of December in that same year, it seems hardly probable that so extensive a task as the covering that portion of the façade with new designs in mosaic can be meant. Milanesi mentions yet another work unknown to Vasari, the head of San Zanobi in mosaic designed in competition with Monte, brother of Gherardo the miniaturist, for the chapel of San Zanobi, in the Duomo. But the mosaic was never placed there, since the judges, no less men than Pietro Perugino, Lorenzo di Credi, and Giovanni delle Corniole, decided in favour of Monte (June 1505).

As a painter we have seen him continually at work in collaboration with his brother Domenico, but as an independent artist he has left us very little whereby to judge of his capacity. One can point to the panel of 'Sta. Lucia,' which hangs on the left pier at the entrance to the Rucellai chapel in Sta. Maria Novella as coming from his hand, a pleasant capable picture which shows how useful he might well be as a craftsman under such an one as Domenico. Vasari, who has the warmest admiration for him as a man, has a very poor opinion of him as a painter, attributing his failure partly to the too easy circumstances of his life, and partly to his having wasted his time upon

mosaic.[1] But Vasari says he was a little better—we might ask leave to say he was very much better—than Benedetto. The latter, whose true *métier* was that of a miniaturist, was perhaps injured by being taken too early from the severe training of the Baldovinetti workshop to help on the great undertakings of the Ghirlandaio firm. He suffered, too, from bad sight, due perhaps to the strain of miniature work. But at best his capacity was of a poor order. It is hardly possible to imagine a more lamentable production from the hand of an artist of any repute than the angular, wooden, theatrical, ugly figures in the panel of the Louvre, 'The Way to Calvary,' which in some parts is hardly above the higher level of a village fair. He went, we know not when, to France, probably to practise miniature-painting for books and returned, Vasari says, wealthy enough, to Florence.

Ridolfo, Domenico's son, was a child of ten years old when his father died, and if we are right in thinking that Domenico's death was preceded by several years of small activity, we can understand why it is that the son, capable artist hereafter, shows no sign in the early stages of his art of having received his inspirations from the work of his father. David, his uncle, who lived in the Via del Comero, and had a shop on the Piazza San Michele Berteldi, after the break up of the Ghirlandaio *bottega*, which probably befel soon after Benedetto's death in 1497, took the boy in hand. He had been very delicate as a child—had been sent to nurse at Prato, and had been on the point of passing to the land of better pictures when Domenico and Antonia vowed a candle of three pounds weight to the Madonna delle Carceri. The little Ridolfo lived, and now at the age of ten found not only a home with kindly David, but friends for the sake of his father's memory. Granacci, Domenico's old pupil, and the friend of Michelangelo,

[1] It should have been mentioned before that Domenico himself was author of the mosaic of the 'Annunciation' over the portal of the Duomo of Florence towards the Via dei Servi, dated 1490, though whether he or David actually fixed the cubes is another question. Milanesi attributes the mosaic of the church of Orbetello, 1485, to Domenico.

Piero di Cosimo, who had worked side by side with Domenico in the Sistine Chapel, probably, too, Cosimo Rosselli, who was still alive, befriended and guided the boy. He studied—it goes without telling, for what artist in Florence did not?—in the recognised training grounds of the Brancacci Chapel, and in the Hall of the Great Cartoons of Lionardo and Michelangelo. But when he paints one of his earliest pictures, it is not to any of these that he seems to lean, but to the uncle Benedetto. A 'Christ on the way to Calvary,'[1] is fashioned on the picture by his uncle, though it is in all respects a finer and more forceful work. The boy was caught, and must be forgiven, by the theatrical elements of that cheap example. But the influence does not last for long. Presently we find him moved now by a reminiscence of Lionardo or Piero di Cosimo or Granacci, at another time working in the style of Fra Bartolommeo, under whom Vasari says he studied, presently again indebted to Raphael —but always adopting the smooth and finished handling of these men. The direct and simple handling of his own father seems to have no magic for the boy. Hereafter indeed he will develop the strong family talent for portrait, but for the present he wavers between his preferences for this model and for that, never really finding himself, the victim of too many partialities, and too many masters. One single less eminent trainer would, perhaps, have better brought out, as it has often done, what may have belonged to the boy himself.

It is not within the scope of this work to go at great length into the works of this painter. To do so would require an expansion of the volume, which would be out of proportion to the interest obtained. It seems better to select rather a certain number of his works, which show him at his best, and it is only just to a very capable painter to say that he is at his best when

[1] National Gallery, No. 1143. Originally in the church of San Gallo, thence transferred to Santo Spirito, and finally to the Palazzo Antinori, whence in 1333 it was sold to England.

he is nearest to himself. To these must be added a few others which are of special interest in the career of the painter.

In the Church of San Jacopo a Ripoli, Ridolfo painted a 'Marriage of St. Catherine,' which is now removed to the Convento alla Quiete, some six miles on the way to Prato, near the station of Castello. This picture has been called, with somewhat exaggerated praise, by Lafenestre, the *chef d'œuvre* of Ridolfo. The picture is rather of interest, because it shows the painter possessed already of no small technical skill and power of drawing, still wavering between the various forms of hero-worship, which as yet have led him along no single path. We have in it memories of Lionardo, and of Fra Bartolommeo, and the face of the Virgin speaks to us of Raphael. A few miles further on at Prato, we find him again later in a large picture of the 'Madonna alla Cintola' (1514), now over the loft above the entrance-door of the Duomo, once in another part of the church. The Madonna has risen from the tomb below, which is now full of its flowers, according to the sweet old legend. Five saints below gaze upwards, together with St. John. Angels support the Madonna in her glory. On the front of the tomb is a gilded medallion of the Nativity. In the background is a landscape of grey hills with a somewhat ghost-like town seen below. The tone of the picture is rich and clear, and not so darkened in the shadows as the Uffizi pictures of the 'Translation of the relics' presently to be spoken of. The dresses of the saints are rich and strong, of the quality of Fra Bartolommeo, the finest figure being that of the saint on the right in green and gold. The Saint Catherine on the right seen in purple, carries us at once to Raphael.[1] The painting of the hands is here very unequal. Those of the Madonna are careful and good, those of the angels are weak.

We find here a well-trained competent craftsman of no great

[1] The lower drapery of Raphael's 'Belle Jardinière Madonna' in the Louvre is due to Ridolfo.

original powers of imagination, and of little original intention and refinement, eminently capable of absorbing other men's ideas and ideals, and ready to do sound work without any inspiration. As yet the various elements of which his art was composed have not assorted and assimilated themselves into his own individuality. Of the influence of Raphael on Ridolfo, we are not left to judge by the evidence of the eye alone. Raphael during his visit to Florence had formed a friendship with and high opinion of Ridolfo. In 1508 Raphael gave a pressing invitation to Ridolfo, then twenty-five years old, to come to Rome to help him in his works in the Vatican. Ridolfo, a Florentine of the Florentines, could not be persuaded to leave his native town, even for so tempting a commission, as it would seem to us. The invitation, however, shows us that Raphael counted him as one who would be ready to work out his designs, in his, the master's, spirit—and he was doubtless right in his estimate.

Perhaps the two most masterly of Ridolfo's works are the two pictures No 1275 and No. 1277 in the Uffizi—the 'Transference of the relics of St. Zanobius to their resting-place in the Duomo' (Plate XLIII.), with the miracle which the shrine in its transit performed in the Piazza San Giovanni behind the Baptistry. The shrine having been lowered to give the bearers rest, the legend had it that a dead tree revived and sprang into life. To-day in that Piazza a column marks the site of this legendary miracle. In the other companion picture No. 1277, 'St. Zanobius restores to life the dead child of a French lady,' in the Borgo degli Albizzi. In the first picture, the shrine, which by the way is not the shrine of Ghiberti's workmanship which now contains the relics, is carried on the shoulders of bishops, while the tree is seen flinging its fresh foliage into the sky above. The colours are deep and transparent, but with a certain tendency to blackness, which reminds one of the same defect in Fra Bartolommeo's later work. The drawing is good upon the whole, but the figures are somewhat short, and the hands lack character,

Alinari Uffizi

THE TRANSLATION OF THE RELICS OF S. ZANOBIUS
(RIDOLFO)

that of the bishop holding up his robe on the far left being weak. The companion subject, the 'Miracle of San Zanobius,' is inferior to the other, presenting the same faults in a higher degree. The drawing is weaker, the colour is heavier and less transparent, while the blackness of the shadows, apparent also in the other picture, has extended itself in this case even to the colour seen in light, to its great injury. The drawing of the hands is again weak. But what makes these pictures valuable in the work of Ridolfo, is the evidence which they give us that the true strength of his art lay in portrait and in portrait groups. This gift which he inherited from his father, if it had been more developed by him, and employed more as the staple of his art, would have given him a far higher place in art than his facile but unconvincing religious pictures entitle him to. In these two Uffizi pictures one can point to several heads of high merit and much character. What one cannot point to is any strong devotional sense, or sympathetic rendering of the scene itself. One feels that Ridolfo did not a bit believe in what he was painting. That may easily have been, nay must have been, oftentimes the fate of many another painter. But he lacks that sympathy, which somehow, in spite of this difficulty which must often have been felt, succeeded in the case of many painters in throwing into their work the earnestness and simple-mindedness of those to whom the subject represented a great truth. These excellent bishops are doing their work with the grave decorum of the best conducted undertakers—nothing more. No one seems moved, surprised, or deeply impressed. The pictures may interest us as students of art, especially of Ridolfo's art, but the spirit that should be in them is lacking, and we look on them unmoved.

And the defect of these pictures is the defect of most which Ridolfo has left us. He gives us academically correct, well painted, dull pictures which make us feel that there must have been in this man something which never came out of him. It is,

so to speak, prosperous art, art which has never had to suffer much, never had to think much, begotten of the painter's circumstances, not of his soul. He never really found himself, because he was never called upon to search for himself. By and by, in the easy course of his Florentine life he falls upon good commissions which are pleasant to execute and do not cause too much wear and tear to the brain. He is called upon to be Master of the Decorations when Giovanni dei Medici, now Leo x., enters Florence in 1515; when Giuliano dei Medici (for whom Michelangelo made the tomb) dies in 1516 at the Badia of Fiesole; when Lorenzo dei Medici, Duke of Urbino in 1518, gets married in Florence, with much carnival and many stage plays; when the same Lorenzo dies in 1519, to go, he also, to the tomb in San Lorenzo, and to sit there as 'Il Pensieroso'; and so the life goes on on easy lines with here an entry of Charles v. in 1536, and there a marriage of a grand Duke Cosimo in 1539. The good uncle David had died in his arms in 1525 and had left him those means to be too well off, *dello star troppo bene*, which the shrewd Vasari thought to have been the bane of David's own art. The tale of Ridolfo's art closes in 1543 with his 'Cenacolo' in the refectory of the Angeli, even to this last not his true self, whatever that should have been, but this time wandering after Andrea del Sarto in the San Salvi work. After that date he paints no more, suffers from gout, lives easily in Florence, the father of fifteen children, and dying in 1560 sleeps with his own fathers in Santa Maria Novella.

And I have deliberately left till now work which seems to place him higher than anything which, so far mentioned, has belonged only to the ordinary products of his career. That portraiture was the branch which should have made him great is a point on which I have dwelt enough. I would merely emphasise it now by reference to two only, omitting all others, of the portraits pure and simple by Ridolfo. Both are in the Pitti Gallery. One of them (No. 224) is the 'Portrait of a Lady'

Alinari

PORTRAIT OF A LADY
(RIDOLFO)

Pitti

PORTRAIT OF A JEWELLER
(RIDOLFO)

(Plate XLIV.) in a red bodice with black sleeves slashed with white, a white *camicia* with a gold chain under, her auburn hair bound with a black ribbon and a gold band. The date is MDVIIII. This is a portrait of that quiet, sober, restrained quality which gives distinction so often to works of the Italian Renaissance painters, even when they cannot be placed absolutely in the very first rank. One is convinced, first of all, that here is a true portrait of one who once lived, and that she has been seen with the eyes of a true artist. It is harmonious, straightforward, simple, though a little unrefined. The painter thinks of his sitter only. There is no display of himself. His personality lies in the sinking of his own personality. You discover it only by unconscious traits. There are plenty of portraits which show more intuitive grasp of character than this, and more fascinating power of expressing it. But it is a portrait that at once gives its author a high place, though not so high as that other in the same gallery (No. 207), 'The Portrait of a Jeweller,' (Plate XLV.) which having passed for over a full generation under the name of Lionardo and, for shorter periods under other names, has at length been assigned to its author Ridolfo. The young man, perhaps that Francesco Baldini who married Ridolfo's half-sister Antonia, wears a black berretta from under which the long light-brown hair streams to his shoulders. He holds in his right hand a jewel, a silver pelican upon a pendant with large pearls, to which his eyes are bent. Badly injured in the past, and painfully varnished in the present, it is a work which fascinates by its beauty, and holds one by the interest which it creates in the personality. It fulfils herein the highest office of portrait painting and though there are points in which it falls technically short of some of the very highest achievements of the Art, yet it is distinctly one of the portraits which continues to fill the imagination and haunt the memory when one is far away from it. That is the highest form of praise which can be bestowed on a portrait, and the fact that the drawing of the hand is less

masterly than it might be weighs little in the balance against the higher quality. He has seen his sitter, that is true, with the eyes with which Lionardo would have seen him, but it is no mere plagiarism or imitation. Ridolfo may here claim to have found himself. One wishes that he had given us more like this.[1]

[1] A good example of the portrait art of Ridolfo is at present in the National Gallery, the loan of Mr. George Salting. It represents an old man with long white hair in a dark *berretta* and robe. The background has been injured and is a good deal repainted.

British Museum

SKETCH FOR THE BIRTH OF THE VIRGIN

CHAPTER XIII

THE ORIGINAL DRAWINGS OF DOMENICO GHIRLANDAIO

A FEW words are needed on the drawings by Domenico which have come down to us. These are fairly numerous and are scattered among the various museums of Europe. They consist of studies for drapery, of portions of drapery, portrait heads, and schemes for his pictures or his frescoes, and nearly all which remain to us seem to have been with direct reference to their subsequent use and seldom as spontaneous exercises, or bits of sudden inspiration. They are in fact either memoranda for use in a special place, or set plans for such work, done without any thought that such drawings would ever be preserved after they had served their immediate purpose. The time indeed when men should set great value on the drawings of the masters, and collect them as independent works of art, had not yet come. Vasari, with his sound artist's instinct, was himself apparently the first to collect and treasure such unconsidered trifles. Up to his day they had survived by happy accident, or because some brother artist, perhaps, had put a few by to learn from or enjoy, or because some portrait-head or the like had a special association for some one who stored it away in a portfolio. Ghirlandaio was one of those who regarded his drawing not as an end in itself but as a means to an end, that end being the fresco or the picture. There were others who even in his day made their drawings as desirable and as loveable as any picture itself can well be. One may quote the exquisitely subtle line and curve which Botticelli gives us in his silver points as an example. One cannot think

of any drawing by Ghirlandaio which could afford to be put by the side of one of these.

It is noticeable that of the drawings which have come down to us by Domenico a very large proportion belong evidently to the period of his latest frescoes and especially to those of Sta. Maria Novella. The explanation of this may perhaps be that when it became evident that Domenico was destined to work no more, some of these things still in existence, still lying about the workshop, perhaps, though the drawings used in earlier works had been destroyed or lost, were naturally kept. We have thus in the British Museum, a sketch for the 'Naming of St. John,' (Plate XLVI.) and a design for the women holding the baby in the 'Marriage of the Virgin,' in which, strange to say, the figure of the handmaid with the pitcher is very slightly and hastily blocked out in the nude. There is also a pen and ink study (Plate XLVII.) for one of the ladies in the gold brocade, the dress only, the head being absent, apparently the dress of Giovanna degli Albizzi; another girl, head and bust, in Florentine corset with a pearl necklace; and a portrait study of an elderly woman in the coif of a Florentine matron, which may have been used in the same series. Again the Uffizi has a scheme for the 'Salutation' and another for the 'Marriage of the Virgin,' also a study (Plate XLVIII.) for the drapery of the Virgin in the 'Salutation' and a drawing in pen and ink of the handmaid in the 'Birth of the Virgin': this drawing however appears to be rather a copy by a scholar of a drawing by Ghirlandaio, or even from the fresco itself. The Albertina collection at Vienna has the scheme for the 'Offering of Zacharias,' and other studies in preparation for the same series exist. All these, it will be seen, belong to the Sta. Maria Novella work. A good and careful study for the drapery of the shepherds in the Accademia picture is in the Uffizi. Of early work there are several examples at Berlin, especially one or two heads of boys which perhaps were studies of the very honest-looking, rather stupid lads in the San

Brit. Mus.

PEN AND INK STUDY

Uffizi

STUDY OF DRAPERY FOR THE SALUTATION

Gimignano fresco of the funeral of Santa Fina. Perhaps these were friends of Bastiano Mainardi, himself a San Gimignano boy, who may have preserved them for old acquaintance sake. There is a head of very great beauty, probably a young Florentine, in the British Museum (Plate XLIX.), which seems to be of his best period and is entirely worthy of him; and in the same collection the head of a clean-shaved shrewd-faced man of middle age, full of character. But on the whole it may be said that there is a scarcity among his preserved drawings of the striking examples of portraiture, which, seeing where Domenico's strength lay, we might have expected to find. We must remember, however, that in the case of others near to this date, Cosimo Rosselli, Botticelli, Filippino Lippi, all of whom made large use of portrait in their groups, a similar dearth of portrait-drawings exists. The fact already stated that the time for collecting such trifles, as the painters themselves then would have deemed them, had not come, must largely account for this, but in the case of Ghirlandaio I am also myself satisfied—it is impossible to adduce proof which shall satisfy other people—that in many cases the portrait heads which appear in his fresco groups were actually painted straight on-to the *intonaco* from the living face of the 'sitter,' who gave his 'sitting' probably as willingly by the side of the fresco as in the *bottega*. This seems to me to be probable not only from the rapid, simple, summary style of many of the heads themselves, in which none of the original force and character of the life portrait seems to have evaporated during the intermediate and dulling process of transfer, but also because of the numerous occasions on which the incised outline of the features has been ignored in the colouring. That seems to me to be consistent with my suggestion. The first process would be an exceedingly rapid outline on the soft wet *intonaco* directly it was laid, by means of a pointed stylus of bone or stick or metal, followed by the immediate application of the colour, the incised outline serving merely as a general guide to be altered and overrun at will. If a cartoon had

always been used from which the outlines could be pounced on to the *intonaco* and incised at once, one cannot see any reason why they should not have been transferred with an absolutely accurate outline. I suggest therefore that Ghirlandaio followed the practice very frequently of painting his heads straight on to his *intonaco* without a preliminary drawing from which any cartoon was prepared, and this may account for the comparative scarcity of preliminary drawings for portrait heads out of the great multitude with which his pictures are peopled. When we remember the large number of personalities of the highest interest, such as Lorenzo dei Medici, Poliziano, Marsilio Ficino and scores of others, it seems incredible that even in the absence of the collector's spirit, more drawings should not have survived if they had existed.

It is noticeable too that studies for drapery and for attitudes are fairly numerous, and can fairly often be found in the final fresco. Some of them, indeed, with very slight modifications were evidently used a good number of times. Here, it may be, a study was handed out for workshop use, to be transferred, probably by pupils, directly to the wall by the process of squaring, or by means of a cartoon similarly produced. I do not remember any drawing by Domenico which has itself been squared, but several of the drawings have deep grooves round the edge made by a blunt pointer, showing that they have been traced on-to another sheet of paper. As the master's drawing might be needed again, perhaps this method was adopted so that only the tracing should be exposed to almost certain ruin from the mess and slush of fresco work.

As we have said, in judging of the merits of these drawings, we must be content in many cases to think of them as merely shorthand directions for what was to follow. They were rarely closely adhered to, often they supplied the merest forecast of the painter's final arrangement. It would be most unfair, therefore, to judge of certain obvious defects in the drawing as we should

Brit. Mus.

STUDY IN SILVER POINT

be bound to do if we were looking at an Academy study from the life. If we turn to Michelangelo's own suggestions to himself for many of his designs—notably the Medici tombs—we find occasionally figures dashed in with a pen and ink of the quality of Dutch dolls—mere symbols for the human figure, enough to convey to his mind the position in which, presently, he might put his humanities. Ghirlandaio often in the same way when he is suggesting a scheme (not when he is completing a careful study) inserts hands and feet that resemble shavings—mere indications of the level at which the feet will come. I must at the same time say that in the drawing of the foot in the shoe of the period Ghirlandaio did often allow drawing, either by himself or by his pupils, but at any rate under his own responsibility, to pass, that was hardly worthy of him. The reader will be able to pick out for himself instances from the Sta. Maria Novella series: it is only just to remember, and the reader will throughout the book have realised it for himself, that Ghirlandaio, who, in his short life of forty-four years, accomplished such great undertakings, was, more than most men, a sufferer by the fact that he was compelled to employ many helpers less capable than himself.

CHAPTER XIV

CONCLUSION

THE art of Domenico Ghirlandaio, whose life and works we have been considering, illustrates, as perhaps no other illustrates, the spirit of the Renaissance: and especially of the Florentine Renaissance in the hour of its strength and vitality. Remove the qualifying adjective Florentine and the statement ceases to be true. This Art belongs to Florence only and is of this time only. It is to us a historical record not of the inner feelings of the Renaissance, not of its deepest yearnings, its dreamy systems of morals, its wanderings amongst the tombs of dead philosophies, and of still more dead mythologies. These must be sought elsewhere. In Ghirlandaio you will find them not. He is the simple straightforward historian of the outward appearance of the life of the Renaissance as he saw it and knew it in the town which he knew best and loved best—his own Florence. And as this was the day and the life which he was by temperament, by training, by experience, and by happy accident, called upon to express, so too he himself becomes a quite typical example to us of that same Florentine Renaissance in the fifteenth century manifestation—that is to say in its endeavour to unite the joys of external material life, the hero-worship for intellectual leaders, for men of force and character in politics and letters, with the Religion whose forms, whose miracles, whose traditions, and to a far greater extent than is often recognised, whose mainspring of devotion—whatever we may say of the

morals that went with it—still maintained a hold upon those who had been named at the font of San Giovanni.

And this external life of the city of his day has been set before us by Ghirlandaio with a convincing completeness to which no artist can pretend, who has helped us in any way to gather from his pictures the life which met the eye of the dwellers in this city or in that, in Milan or Venice, Perugia or Siena, in any given century. For Venice, indeed, and its sumptuous life we have a rich mine of scattered witness in the pictures of the Bellini and Carpaccio and many another; but from one single hand no record that can compare with that of the Florentine painter. And I very much doubt whether any of us quite recognises the greatness of the debt which we owe to him in this respect. Take away his work: let its record be clean removed: its memory obliterated—and how should we then set to work to reconstruct the mental picture, which all who know Florence well must have formed, of the life which once peopled its streets. That race of strong men and of stately women who become known to us through his pictures—familiarly known so that we think of them through him—should we be able equally to conjure up the vision without him? Should we ever be able to realise the men as their fellow-men looked upon them by any process of personifying from their deeds or from their writings? I wonder how many ever read a line of Poliziano or Lorenzo, of Marsilio Ficino or Landini, or would enjoy it if they did?

But be it noted, we can claim for him that he is the illustrator of the external appearances only of the life of the Renaissance in Florence—illustrator more faithful and more valuable for the very reason that he reads into it none of the visions of which we become aware through its literature, and to some extent by the more mystic, more allegorical, and no doubt more poetical work of such men among its painters as Sandro Botticelli and Piero di Cosimo. Of that there may be, there

must be, full confession made, and without that full confession we shall entirely fail to comprehend Ghirlandaio's unique position in Art. He is in his outlook quite unlike his great contemporary Botticelli, who, with wistful, dreamy eyes, is for ever trying to see through the diaphanous bodily covering of his Flora or his Venus into the hidden meaning that lies beneath, always trying to express in his Madonnas those hidden depths of human yearning which neither he nor any other can fathom or express. Ghirlandaio again is quite unlike to that other dreamer of dreams, Piero di Cosimo, quaint, poetic, trying to live back into, and speak in the language of, a past which he still knows to be a past, since he too must often see it dressed as in his own Florence—pathetically conscious that 'Pan, Pan, is dead.' With neither of these men has Domenico anything in common, except the one greatest possession of these and of all true artists—the fact that he was true to his own artistic instincts and not to those of some other, and that he possessed his own soul. For him there is no allegory, no symbol, often enough no second meaning. He sets forth the life simply as he sees it, makes no pretence to seeing what he does not see; sees and paints plain men and women as a plain man, yet feels it all very deeply as a man, is full all the time of a certain manly, wholesome sympathy which becomes, when he is in the presence of religion, in spite of all that has been charged against him, a religion in itself.

He has been charged—it has become quite a fashion to charge him without going any further into the evidence—by many writers with being a Pagan. The word is very vague and has been applied with great freedom to nearly all the artists of the Renaissance in their turn. But if it means the same that it must mean when it is applied to some other artists, namely that he had a double vision, in which the old myths and allegories of Pagan days kept mixing themselves with and obliterating the Christian vision as it had come down to his day, it is a term wholly

inapplicable to his attitude of mind. If it is intended to mean that he suffered from the nostalgia—the home-sickness—which made poor Piero di Cosimo for ever look backwards to a shore that had long receded, nothing could be more unlike the truth. If it is meant that Ghirlandaio, without viewing life from either of those points of view, yet gave colour to the charge by always or even constantly employing the same set of external forms, draperies, dresses which the artists and poets of Pagan days employed—the charge is less true against him than against any painter of the Renaissance. If the reader—who very likely has in his day accepted these charges which have been made by good authorities, and have passed thence into the hand-books—will take the trouble to examine all the pictures which remain to us as the undoubted work of the painter, or put forth under his responsibility, he will be astonished to find that classical subject is almost unrepresented;[1] that Pagan motive, or secondary vision, such as can be found in the work of other painters of his day, is not in a single instance clearly to be traced; that his use even of classical drapery is much restricted, being confined to those conventional accepted draperies of saints and religious personages which came down from the earliest traditions of Christian art. Of symbol derived from Pagan sources there is almost nothing, and what there is has been forced upon him by tradition, by the necessity of his subject, or even by the direct terms of his contract. Here are the chief examples which occur to me. In the fresco of the Sala dell' Orologio in the Palazzo Vecchio he personifies the virtues of a Republic under the guise of ancient 'Roman heroes,' not probably a symbol of his own ordaining, and expressed with a curious lack of enthusiasm. In the Sistine Library we have the 'Ancient Greek Philosophers,' suitable occupants of such a library, who share the walls with the 'Fathers of the Church,' once more one may feel sure at the dictation of another mind,

[1] The ruined fresco of 'Vulcan at his Forge' for Lorenzo dei Medici at Volterra is the only downright classical subject I can remember from Ghirlandaio's hand.

perhaps that of Sixtus himself. We have again, over the arch in the Trinita, the 'Tiburtine Sibyl' appearing to Augustus to prophesy the Kingdom of Christ, and in the vault of the chapel itself the figures of the 'Sibyls' themselves, in the same religious reference. But this use of the Sibyls was founded on a very ancient tradition by which those mystical beings had been taken over by the Church and placed on the list of those who had foretold the coming of the great Unknown One, the dimly seen Redeemer. And it will not be forgotten that they had played their part,—as for instance in the Pulpit of Giovanni Pisano at Pistoia,—in the art of those who cannot be accused of any savour of the Paganism of the Renaissance. I am unable to recall any other examples than these in Ghirlandaio's work, unless his constant introduction of classical architectural detail—which had become the architecture of his own day in Florence—may be urged in proof of a leaning to Paganism. But if so he will receive sentence in common with almost every artist who painted in Italy after the middle of the fifteenth, and in Germany after the last ten years or so of the sixteenth, century. And Ghirlandaio's choice of these classical details of architecture is a purely artistic preference resulting from his love of perspective effect, and his partiality for set compositions, which, as we have seen, occur in nine out of ten of his larger works. He peoples these same classical surroundings—probably the result of his Roman visits, during which Vasari tells us he acquired such power of drawing that he drew the Colosseum, by eye only, accurately to scale—with no Pagan nudities but with his carefully clad Florentines. I would, in this connection again, draw attention to the fact that in his early works at Brozzi and at Lucca his St. Sebastian appears not as the young Apollo of other Renaissance painters but in the costume of the City of the Medici.

I have dwelt somewhat at length upon this feature of Domenico's art—developed as it was in a day when the motives, the subjects, and to some extent the spirit of Pagan art were

animating so many painters—because I think that the absence of these characters in the art of Domenico has hardly been realised. It is one of those cases where an opinion seems to have taken such deep root and spread so widely, that nothing but an appeal to mere statistics is likely to uproot it. Even so learned and so well furnished a critic as the late Mr. J. A. Symonds writes this sentence in his very adverse summing up of Ghirlandaio's art. 'He handled sacred and profane, ancient and modern subjects in the same style, introducing contemporary custom and portraits.' Yet, as a matter of fact, on the two occasions in all his career when Ghirlandaio painted a profane subject—namely, in the 'Vulcan's Smithy' of Volterra and the 'Sibyl appearing to Augustus' of the Trinita—he painted the figures in the costume or lack of costume of their period, nudes in the Vulcan, in Roman armour and draperies in the Sibyl. He never treated a modern, that is a fifteenth-century, subject, other than in connection with a religious subject, nor any ancient (except the two above mentioned) outside of a similar religious connection. I have selected the above example from the works of a critic of received reputation, but it would be possible to add not a few quotations from other sources, where this curious misconception as to the real facts of Ghirlandaio's practice has been repeated without examination.

But it will be seen that up to this point we have been dealing almost wholly with the charge of Paganism as concerned with the subjects, secondary meaning, external forms employed by the painter. It may quite justly be said that in this case the defence employed may be sound, and yet there may remain behind an element in Ghirlandaio's art which still lays him open to the accusation in this sense, that the religion of his art is wholly swallowed up by its worldliness, and that therefore it is Pagan in the broadest sense, that it is irreligious, or at any rate wanting in religious impression. And although of all the pictures which

Ghirlandaio painted we know hardly any which had not a religious subject or a religious connection, yet that fact alone would not disprove the charge which is most succinctly expressed in the words, quoted in an earlier page against the frescoes of the Trinita: 'Ghirlandaio made religious subjects the excuse for mere portrait painting.' The reader will not wish me to repeat all that has been said in the chapter of this book which deals with the Sistine fresco. I there tried to show that the introduction of contemporary portraits had grown stage by stage out of a practice which was founded on a spirit of deep devotion, and on the desire to express, through a pictured presence in a painting, an act of faith, a visible witnessing to the truth recorded in the main action of the picture—'Visitation,' 'Nativity,' 'Adoration of the Kings,' or even the abstract idea of the 'Misericordia' of the Madonna, all of which things were still objects of the most earnest and reverent belief to those attendant Florentines, in spite of their believing it all in very rich costumes. Those who think that even during the worst phases of Italian life—and the life of the Renaissance in Florence was never so bad as in some other centres—the sense of religion was lost, are very far from realising one of the strangest problems that the history of Ethics presents us with. But that problem cannot here be discussed. Piety took strange forms, or say rather that it walked side by side with strange deeds. But the pious purpose had not departed, was not to depart yet for a long time from the religious picture. The fact, which has been frankly admitted in these pages, that Ghirlandaio did not possess a deep mystical vision, nor yet a poetical imagination, nor even that sense of spiritual beauty which painters of less worth as men possessed, is the only true and just explanation of the so-called irreligious element in Ghirlandaio's art. The spiritual, which was dim in him, though honest and reverent as it often is in persons who see spiritual things dimly and with difficulty, was wholly outweighed in this strong, clear-sighted, and quite healthy-minded artist, by his presentment of those

things which he did see in no sense dimly or with difficulty. I deliberately call him healthy-minded, for it is impossible to point to one instance in all the range of his art where there is the least approach to the decadent, sickly-sensuous, or effeminate treatment of any theme which he handled. His art is always virile and always worthy. He paints men and women for us of a type that it is no treason to our highest sense of manhood and womanhood to admire. Clad nobly, sumptuously, too sumptuously if you will, they have no fault to be pardoned for except that they attended a religious scene in the clothes in which they ordinarily were seen at church. The age, as Savonarola was to tell them before the paint was well hard on the frescoes of the Novella, was perhaps all wrong to wear such clothes, still more to go to church in them; but wearing them as they did at church in Domenico's day, and desiring to be painted as witnesses at the Visitation, the Nativity of the Virgin, the Presentation in the Temple, how else were they to be painted? It is nothing to the point that he enjoyed the painting of them so. Of course he did. What artist would not? But he was artist, not moralist—and he had not, moreover, lived till the true day of the *piagnoni*; he did not see the first bonfire in the Piazza San Marco, when perhaps some of the very jewels which had come from the Ghirlandaio workshop, and were worn by his ladies of the Novella, got flung upon the flames. He might perhaps have repented of his well-clad Florentines as Fra Bartolommeo of his nudes, or he might, though it is less likely, have turned inwards upon Dante like Botticelli, if he had lived to come under the influence of the Frate. But living when he did, and dying when he did, he need plead guilty to no further crime than that he painted his religious pictures honestly as he saw them with his limited spiritual insight, and his Florentines present thereat honestly too, as he saw them with his very full practical vision. And those who have stood long before the 'Adoration of the Kings' in the Innocenti, and the 'Adoration of the Shepherds' in the Accademia, will not be slow to thank him for these first,

nor those who have seen the Florentine bride, as she steps in her pure and stately beauty in the fresco of the Novella, to thank him for this last.

All this, however, concerns the position of the artist with respect to the religion of himself and of his day, the day of the Renaissance in Florence, and his position as a thinker upon the themes which he was set to present. The question of his art *quâ* art and not as morals, thought, or poetry, is quite another matter, and must be dealt with from a different standpoint. His rank as an artist must be estimated apart from his rank as a moralist or as a thinker.

Here again he has, I think, suffered from the very great interest of the personalities which his pictures abound in. Even those who accord the freest praise and admiration to these seem half inclined to mistrust his powers as a painter on that very account. He has even been patronisingly described as a second-rate painter, who has attracted more attention than he deserved because of the interest of his personalities and his record of Florentine life. Those who feel very kindly towards the man, and are grateful to him also for his entertainment, are still apt to believe that they have given him more than his due as a painter. He has beguiled them, they think, with his trappings, dazzled them, confused their judgments with his pageantry. He would not, under the colder light of criticism, be given so high a place, they say.

If we take each feature of his painting separately, line, form, colour, composition: modelling, drawing, perspective: atmosphere, lighting, sense of values; we may find amongst the painters of the fifteenth century for each distinct element named above some one man who is his equal in that given point—we are speaking now, be it remembered, purely of technical qualities, and not any longer of the higher attributes of imagination, poetry, power of expression—but taken in combination, it is very difficult to name one who is so well equipped as an artist. The occasions on which

fair comparison is possible are not numerous, because the characteristics of his art place him in a great majority of cases, as, for example, the Novella series, *hors concours*. The comparison with other painters is in many cases futile, since common features do not belong to the pictures compared. But, taking the 'Calling of the First Apostles' in the Sistine, the 'Death of Saint Francis' in the Trinita, and the 'Adoration of the Kings' in the Innocenti as three of his most unquestioned masterpieces, we shall find in them qualities which will stand very high tests from the mere standpoint of technique. Beauty of line in its highest form is not one of the qualities which we should claim for him—he yields in that respect to many other painters—not that his line is obtrusively lacking in beauty, but it does not attain to the engaging quality which Botticelli, Filippo Lippi, and Perugino (to some extent) present, and we have seen that search for characteristic lines of portrait-strength dominated his drawings, just as the search for beauty of line dominated those of Sandro.

In colour, again, he will not of course challenge comparison with the great Venetian masters—but what Florentine could? His colour looks back to the earlier school (and it was not the Florentines who were destined to move painting into a different groove), in which the picture was thought of as a drawing first and foremost, to which colour was to be applied, in more or less vivid patches, as pleasantly as the painter could. Nor, as a fact, did Florentine and Umbrian art ever get far beyond that even in their latest development, the most colourful panel of Raphael remaining as a coloured drawing compared with the work of the later Venetians. But amongst those who lay under the older traditions, Ghirlandaio may claim a better place as a colourist than has been sometimes given to him. A distinction must be made between his colour as a fresco-painter in large, and a tempera-painter in little—a distinction which is analogous to the difference of handling, which we also find in his work in these two branches.

We have already alluded several times to the absence of any work in oil or varnish medium from his hand. In fresco his colour is always low in tone, becoming more so till in the frescoes of the Novella fault may be found with it on the grounds that as applied to the internal walls of a building it is not only less gay and pleasurable thereby—a fact which may easily be seen by walking as far as Orcagna's 'Paradiso' close at hand—but because it absorbs too much light. In his earlier fresco in the Sistine this tendency has already begun to show itself, and it is perhaps owing to this very fact, the work being less pleasurable to the eye as a mere piece of warm colour on a wall, that its great qualities have not been always done justice to. But when we go from his wall-fresco to his tempera panels we find not only no tendency to dulness or gravity of tone, but, on the contrary, a tendency to vividness and transparency of colour, strong tint being laid against strong tint in full strength without blending or fusion, and yet without discordance—except once or twice where he has used ultramarine in its almost full strength, and that colour alone has maintained its force. He is, in fact, perhaps the most notable exponent of the method—absolutely opposed to that of the Venetians—in which colour-results are obtained by juxtaposition of strong, pure tints, a primitive method whose greatest success must always fall short of the art of the great colourists of a later day. The Innocenti 'Adoration' is the best example of Ghirlandaio's success in this method—the Uffizi *tondo* the most gaudy. Of the soundness of Ghirlandaio's technical methods as a craftsman the Innocenti picture is a standing witness.

It is not, however, in these smaller, more brilliant, and most careful tempera pictures on panel that Ghirlandaio was able to exhibit the qualities which will most interest the modern artist. Such an one is able now to gauge the value of all the triumphs which art has since achieved in mastering the problems of atmosphere and lighting. But he will recognise in Ghirlandaio the painter who, in his day, when such problems had scarcely begun to

be of interest, save here and there to some Masaccio or Piero della Francesca, was able to paint pictures in which, rather by the truth of his observation than by any scientific grappling with the problems—for his temperament was not of the scientific, experimental type of Piero's—difficulties are entertained and overcome which are still difficulties to many men who now have the achievements and failures of four more centuries to help them. The breadth and atmosphere of the Sistine landscape, the truthful lighting of the chamber in the Novella fresco of the 'Birth of the Virgin,' would be worthy achievements in any age, but are pioneer work of the highest value in the age in which they were painted.

Breadth, largeness of handling, of conception, of composition, of presentation—these are characteristics which are never wanting in the frescoes which have come to us unspoilt from Domenico's hand. 'To paint the walls of Florence in fresco' is the ambition of the man. Then, remembering these words, and with full understanding of the spirit which they express, and express quite truthfully without bombast or vain boasting, climb up on the scaffolds of Sta. Maria Novella and take close view of his work. You will find it broad, large, summary, satisfying—but with no carelessness nor hastiness nor slurring—an unerring certainty of means producing an unfailing breadth of result. But what will give most surprise—I speak entirely here of the lower frescoes, and in them of those parts only which come entirely from Domenico himself—will be the discovery that these frescoes do not lose by close examination, but while they produce their right effect when seen at their proper distance, yet even here, when seen close by, they are in the highest degree enjoyable. They are careful always, but with the care of a man who has from his earliest days so practised care that it is less trouble to him now to do careful work than to do careless. His work is often done at speed and with summary expression, but never in haste nor under excitement. He is always self-possessed, sure of himself. This

self-possession had been his and had marked his whole career since the days in the Baldovinetti *bottega*, when he quietly put away all the enticing juices and varnishes which captured the experimental spirit of the master, to follow the safe path of old-fashioned fresco and tempera. 'The Apotheosis of Common Sense,' Mr. J. A. Symonds calls him, in acknowledged contempt for the quality which is supposed to be the contradiction of genius. Genius, indeed, is not that which we should claim for him, but talent of the highest order, artistic instinct, broad power of grasping all the essentials of his art, and extraordinary self-control in his use of them. And he produces a result which is his own, which has upon it the special stamp which never fails to impress itself on the work of any artist who 'follows his own star.'

Is this enough to place him in the first rank of artists? I certainly hold that it is, though not of course in that small and select company of the Immortals in art to which so few may be admitted. The first rank will have to be very much limited, and certainly many will have to be cast out who at present are allowed to hold places there, if room cannot be found for Domenico Ghirlandaio. There are grades even in that first rank, and the standard by which the candidates will be judged will vary with the preferences of the individual who judges. To one it will depend very much upon the range and direction of the artist's poetic vision; to another the test will lie with the brilliancy and dash of the artist's technique; to a third with the charm of colour; to a fourth with the beauty of his design; and so on through all the varying qualities by which art can captivate men's varying temperaments. But such judgments, fascinating as they are to those who make them, are very often indeed verdicts to flatter the personality of the judge rather than to do justice to the intrinsic merit of the suitor. From such judgments there lies always an appeal. In Ghirlandaio's case the appeal is to an achievement in art by which he occupies an unique place, for the attainment of

which most of the qualities that go to make great art have been employed in rich combination by one who, so long as a fragment of the frescoes of the Sistine or the Trinita or the Novella hang together on their walls, will demand and surely receive our verdict as one of the great painters in a great period of the Art of Italy.

I

CHRONOLOGY OF DOMENICO GHIRLANDAIO'S LIFE

The ascertained dates which rest on documentary evidence or signature are marked with a star.

1449. *Domenico di Tommaso di Currado Bigordi detto il Ghirlandaio, born in Florence.

?1471. Painted the 'Madonna between Saints' at Brozzi, near Florence.

?1472. Painted the fresco of the Vespucci family in the Church of Ognissanti, Florence.

1475. *Painted, with his brother David, the Decorations of the Sistine Library, Rome.

1475-6. Painted the frescoes of the Chapel of Sta. Fina in the Collegiata of San Gimignano.

1476-7. *Painted with David, on the commission of Don Isidoro del Sera, a 'Cenacolo,' now lost, in the Monastery of Passignano.

1480. *The picture for the Church of the Camaldoli in San Frediano.

1480. *The 'Cenacolo' of Ognissanti Refectory.

1480. *The 'St. Jerome' once in the transept of the Church of Ognissanti, now transferred to the nave.

1480-1. *Contract of October 27, 1481—completed before March 15, 1482—The fresco of the 'Calling of the First Disciples,' and 'Popes' in the Sistine Chapel, Rome.

1480-1. *'Cenacolo,' now destroyed, for the Nuns of San Donato in Polverosa. (Payment made May 31, 1481, in 21 gold florins.)

?1480-1. The 'Life of the Virgin and St. John Baptist,' painted in the Tornabuoni Chapel in the Minerva Church, Rome.

1481-4. *The fresco of the Apotheosis of 'S. Zenobius' in the Sala dell' Orologio, Palazzo della Signoria, Florence. (Payments made in 1481, 1482, and 1483.)

1482. *Married Costanza di Bartolommeo Nucci.

1482. *Picture for the Nuns of Monticelli.

1483. *Birth of Ridolfo Ghirlandaio.

1483. *Commission for the altar-piece of the Chapel in the Palazzo della Signoria, dated May 20.
1484. *Four Candlesticks, coloured and gilded, for the Church of Sta. Maria del Fiore.
1485. *Death of Costanza di Bartolommeo Nucci.
1485. *Frescoes of the Sassetti Chapel, Sta. Trinita, Florence: completed December 15. The altar-piece, 'Adoration of the Shepherds,' now in the Accademia delle Belle Arti (195).
1485. *Commission given by Giovanni Tornabuoni for the frescoes of Sta. Maria Novella.
1486. *The frescoes commenced. Finished in 1490.
1486. The 'Coronation of the Virgin' for San Girolamo, Narni (now in the Palazzo Pubblico, Narni).
1487. *Commission to paint the Cappella Maggiore of the Badia di Settimo (carried out by his *bottega*).
1487. *'Adoration of the Kings,' Tondo in the Uffizi (No. 1295).
1488. *'Adoration of the Kings,' in the Church of the Hospital of the Innocenti, Florence.
1488. *Marries Antonia di Ser Paolo di Simone Paoli, a widow of San Gimignano.
1489. *Mosaic of 'The Annunciation' over the portal of the Duomo towards the Via dei Servi.
1490. *Completion of the Sta. Maria Novella frescoes.
1491. *'The Salutation,' now in the Louvre, completed by David and Mainardi, for the Chapel of Lorenzo Tornabuoni in the Cestello (Sta. Maria Maddalena dei Pazzi).
1494. *Death of Domenico Ghirlandaio from pestilential fever, January 11. Buried in Sta. Maria Novella.
1497. Death of Benedetto Ghirlandaio (brother of Domenico).
1525. Death of David Ghirlandaio (brother of Domenico).
1560. Death of Ridolfo Ghirlandaio (son of Domenico).

II

WORKS BY DOMENICO GHIRLANDAIO MENTIONED BY VASARI

Compiled from '*Le Opere di Giorgio Vasari con nuove annotazioni e commenti di Gaetano Milanesi.*' Florence: G. C. Sansoni. Ed. 1906.

'PLACE' *in this list refers to the town where the work was to be seen in Vasari's day.*

PRESENT FATE.	PLACE.	ORIGINAL DESTINATION AND DESCRIPTION.
EXISTS (recovered from under whitewash) *in situ.*	Florence.	Church of Ognissanti. Chapel of Vespucci family. Fresco. 'Pietà' and 'Madonna della Misericordia.'
EXIST *in situ.*	Rome.	Vatican. Library of Sixtus IV. Decorations in fresco work carried out chiefly by David Ghirlandaio.
EXIST.	San Gimignano.	Collegiata. Frescoes in the chapel of Sta. Fina, with aid of Mainardi.
PERISHED.	Passignano.	Monastery Refectory. 'Cenacolo' in fresco.
UNKNOWN.	Passignano.	Monastery. 2 pictures by Domenico and David.
UNKNOWN.	San Frediano.	Camaldoli Church. Picture.
EXISTS (Uffizi, No. 1297).	Florence.	Church of San Giusto: thence transferred to San Giovannino (La Calza). The 'Madonna Enthroned with S. Giusto, S. Zanobi, S. Raphael, S. Michael.'
EXISTS *in situ.*	Florence.	Ognissanti Refectory. 'Cenacolo' fresco, 1480.
EXISTS *in situ.*	Florence.	Ognissanti Church. Now in nave, formerly in transept. Fresco of 'St. Jerome.' 1480.

PRESENT FATE.	PLACE.	ORIGINAL DESTINATION AND DESCRIPTION.
Lost.	Florence.	Ognissanti Church. Fresco of 'St. George and the Dragon.'
Exist in part *in situ.*	Rome.	Vatican. Sistine Chapel. Fresco of 'The Calling of the First Disciples' (on right wall). Fresco of 'Resurrection,' entrance wall (painted over entirely).
Lost.	Rome.	Church of Sta. Maria Sopra Minerva. Tornabuoni Chapel. Frescoes of 'The Life of the Virgin Mary and St. John Baptist.'
Exist *in situ.*	Florence.	Palazzo della Signoria (Palazzo Vecchio). Sala dell' Orologio. Fresco decorations with the 'Apotheosis of San Zanobi,' 1481-4.
Lost.	Florence.	Sta. Maria del Fiore. Four painted and gilded Candlesticks, 1484.
Exists *in situ.*	Florence.	Monastery of San Marco. Small Refectory. 'Cenacolo' fresco.
Exists *in situ.*	Lucca.	Church of San Martino. Sacristy. 'Madonna with St. Clement, St. Sebastian, St. Peter, St. Paul.' Tempera.
Exists *in situ.*	San Gimignano.	Collegiata. Chapel of the Annunciation. Fresco of 'The Annunciation' (work carried out by Sebastian Mainardi, 1492).
Exists (No. 66) Accademia delle Belle Arti, Florence.	Florence.	Church of San Giusto, for the Frati Ingesuati. 'Madonna, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Dionysius, St. Clement, St. Dominic.' Tempera.
Unknown.	Florence.	Church of San Marco. Transept, a picture undescribed.
Disappeared.	Florence.	Sta. Croce. Fresco of the 'Life of San Paolino' on right hand of entrance.
Destroyed with the Church in 1785.	Florence.	Church of Sta. Maria Ughi. Arch over the portal. Fresco.
Unknown.	Florence.	Arte dei Linaiuoli. Tabernacle.

PRESENT FATE.	PLACE.	ORIGINAL DESTINATION AND DESCRIPTION.
UNKNOWN (went to England).	Florence.	House of Giovanni Tornabuoni. Tondo, 'fatto con diligenza,' of the 'Adoration of the Kings.' Afterwards in Palazzo Pandolfini.
HAS DISAPPEARED (except a few patches).	Volterra.	Spedaletto (now a 'Casa di Fattoria' of Prince Corsini, ed. Mil. 1906): 'The Story of Vulcan,' with many nude figures painted for Lorenzo dei Medici. Fresco.
UNKNOWN.	Siena.	Palazzo Spanocchi. A room decorated by Domenico Ghirlandaio and Mainardi, with a number of small figures in tempera.
PERISHED.	Florence.	Sta. Maria Nuova. Fresco of 'Saint Michael,' 'with fine reflections on the armour very unusual.'—G. V.
EXISTS (in Palazzo Comunale).	Rimini.	For Carlo Malatesta. 'S. Vincent (Ferrerius), S. Sebastian, S. Roch,' in marble niches. The 'Eternal Father' in lunette above. Three 'Stories from the Lives of the Saints' below. Tempera on panel. (The work of scholars.)
UNKNOWN.	Carpi.	For 'il Signor di Carpi.' A picture not further described.
EXISTS *in situ*, much injured.	Settimo.	Badia. Façade of the Cappella Maggiore. Fresco, *bottega* work, begun 1479.
EXIST. (Museo Civico).	Pisa.	San Girolamo. Two pictures in tempera. Afterwards in Church of Sta. Anna: recently removed to Museo Civico, Pisa.
EXISTS in ruined state from weather.	Pisa.	Façade of the Opera del Duomo. Fresco of 'Charles v. interceding for Pisa.'
UNKNOWN.	Pisa.	San Girolamo, for the Frati Gesuati. A picture of 'St. Roch and St. Sebastian,' the gift of one of the Medici. It bore the arms of Leo x.

PRESENT FATE.	PLACE.	ORIGINAL DESTINATION AND DESCRIPTION.
Exist *in situ*.	Florence.	Church of Sta. Trinita. Frescoes of the Sassetti Chapel. 'Life of St. Francis,' for Francesco Sassetti. Completed December 15, 1485.
Exists *in situ* (recovered from under whitewash, and much restored).	Florence.	Above the arch of the Sassetti Chapel 'The Meeting of Augustus and the Sibyl.'
Exists (in Accademia, No. 195).	Florence.	For the same Chapel. The altar-piece of 'The Adoration of the Shepherds.' Tempera on panel. 1485.
Perished with the Chapel.	Florence.	Villa Lemmi at Chiasso Maceregli, for Giovanni Tornabuoni, frescoes in the chapel on the bank of the stream Terzolle, still existing in Vasari's time, now disappeared.
Uncertain.	Orbetello.	Two tondi in tempera. Milanesi believes one of these to be the tondo No. 1295 Uffizi, 'The Adoration of the Kings.' Tempera on panel, 1487.
Exists *in situ*.	Florence.	Church of the Innocenti (foundling) Hospital. 'The Adoration of the Kings.' Tempera on panel, 1488.
Exist *in situ*.	Florence.	Choir of Sta. Maria Novella. Frescoes (left) 'Life of the Virgin Mary,' (right) 'Life of St. John the Baptist.' 1485-1490 (commission given in Oct. 1485).
Exist in Berlin (74, 75, 76). Munich (1011, 1012, 1013).	Florence.	Altar-piece of the same chapel. Completed by Mainardi, Granacci, David and Benedetto Ghirlandaio (perhaps after Domenico's death). The altar was dismantled in 1804, the front portion is at Munich ('The Madonna in Glory with Saints'); the back portion ('The Resurrection') is at Berlin.
Exists *in situ*.	Florence.	Duomo. Mosaic of 'The Annunciation' over the door looking towards the Via Servi. 1490.

PRESENT FATE.	PLACE.	ORIGINAL DESTINATION AND DESCRIPTION.
Exists (in Louvre, No. 1321).	Florence.	For the Chapel of Lorenzo Tornabuoni in the Cestello (Sta. Maria Maddalena dei Pazzi), 1491, tempera on panel. 'The Salutation.' Carried out by David Ghirlandaio and Mainardi.
Repainted.	Pisa.	Duomo. Recess of the Altare Maggiore.
Repainted by Marini.	Pisa.	Duomo. 'Annunciation' fresco on the arch of the chapel of the Annunciation; also the organ doors; and the gilding and decoration of the loft. (Domenico and Mainardi, date uncertain, but payment was not made till after Domenico's death in 1494 by the Opera del Duomo).
Exists (in Palazzo Pubblico).	Volterra.	Abbey Church of San Giusto. The Altar of San Romualdo with pictures of 'San Romualdo, S. Benedetto, Sta. Attinia, Sta. Greciniana,' with 'Christ between two angels.' Tempera on panel. Commission of Don Giusto Buonvicini, Abbot, 1492.
Unknown.	Volterra.	Abbey Church of San Giusto. Another picture undescribed (Milanesi states that a picture exists in the Oratory of S. Antonio ascribed to D. Ghirlandaio).
Unknown.	Various.	Vasari speaks of many works for private houses in Florence and much work done in Pisa.

III

LIST OF WORKS BY DOMENICO GHIRLANDAIO NOT MENTIONED BY VASARI.

Those whose authenticity rests on the evidence of documents are marked with a star.

'PLACE' *in this list refers to the town where the work is to be seen to-day.*

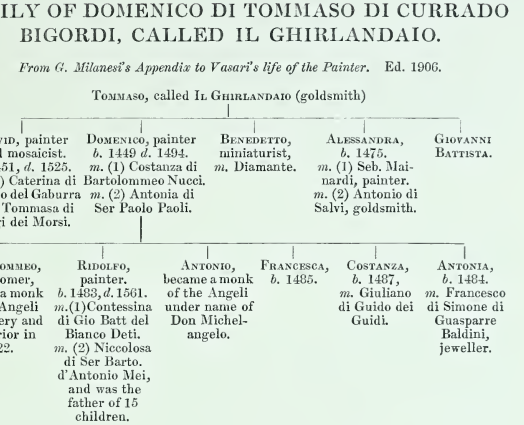
PRESENT FATE.	PLACE.	ORIGINAL DESTINATION AND DESCRIPTION.
REPAINTED.*	San Gimignano.	Collegiata. Decorations in the vault of the nave, executed in company with Pietro da Firenze before 1474.
EXISTS *in situ*.	Brozzi, near Florence.	Church of S. Andrea. Chapel on the left. 'Fresco of the Madonna between S. Sebastian and S. Michael' (no record). Not universally accepted.
EXISTS (Pitti Gallery, No. 358).	Florence.	Tondo of 'The Adoration of the Kings.' Tempera on panel.
EXISTS (Berlin Gallery, No. 21).	Berlin.	'Judith and Holofernes.' Small panel, tempera. Passed till recently under the name of Mantegna. Not universally accepted.
EXISTS (Nat. Gall. No. 1299).	London.	Portrait of a youth. Bust, life size, nearly full face, clad in a bluish-grey doublet with narrow black collar. A dark green mantle over his left shoulder, wears a purple berretta. Panel.
EXISTS (Nat. Gall. No. 1230).	London.	Bust-Portrait of a girl under life size, three-quarters face to left. The dress a scarlet body laced in front, overlaid with a transparent gauze chemisette, green sleeves: dark background. On wood in tempera. Neither of the above two portraits can be unreservedly accepted as the work of the master. They are, however, the only works belonging to our National Gallery which bear his name.

PRESENT FATE.	PLACE.	ORIGINAL DESTINATION AND DESCRIPTION.
Exists (London Nat. Gall., no number, loan of Mr. George Salting).	London.	Half-length portrait of Costanza dei Medici. She sits with her hands leaning on a sill on which are strewn a few jewels, gold pins, etc. She holds a small white flower in her right hand. She wears a pale rose bodice laced in front, and edged with small seed pearls. On the left of the picture is her name on a label. Tempera. Panel. Not universally accepted.
Exists (Louvre No. 1322).	Paris.	Portrait of an old man in red tunic looking down at a child. Tempera on panel.
Exists (in Uffizi, 1295).	Florence.	Possibly the *Tondo for Orbetello, 'Adoration of the Kings.' Tempera on panel, 1487.
Perished with the Convent.*	San Donato in Polverosa.	'Cenacolo' for the Nuns of the Convent (paid for May 31, 1481).
Unknown.*	Il Palco near Prato.	For the Convent of Il Palco fuori di Prato. A 'Madonna enthroned, with S. Francisco, S. Buonaventura, S. Antonio di Padua, S. Bernardino di Siena.' Commissioned August 20, 1490. A document showing that 35 gold florins were paid to Domenico Ghirlandaio proves that the commission was duly carried out. It had been previously supposed that Filippino Lippi had executed the commission. The picture painted by him of the same subject is hereby shown to have had no connection with the above commission.
Exists (Collection of Mr. J. Pierpont Morgan, London).	London.	Half-length portrait Giovanna degli Albizzi. Tempera on panel.

IV

FAMILY OF DOMENICO DI TOMMASO DI CURRADO BIGORDI, CALLED IL GHIRLANDAIO.

From G. Milanesi's Appendix to Vasari's life of the Painter. Ed. 1906.



V

COPY OF THE REGISTER OF THE 'FRATELLI MORTI DELLA COMPAGNIA DI SAN PAOLO,' CONCERNING THE BURIAL OF DOMENICO GHIRLANDAIO IN SANTA MARIA NOVELLA.

'Domenico di Tommaso di Churrado Bighordi Dipintore detto del Grillandaio morì sabato mattina a dì xi di gennaio 1493 (st. c 1494) di febre pestilenziale secondo si disse perchè morì in 4 dì: e quello che erano sopra la Peste non vollono vi s'andasse al morto e non vollo (*no*) si sotterrasse il dì. Sotterrossi sabato sera in Santa Maria Novella tra le 28 e l'una ora: e Dio gli perdoni. Funne grandissimo danno perchè era huomo di Chonto per ogni parte di suo' qualità e dolse molto Generalmente. (Archivio di stato in Firenze: Compagnia di San Paolo libro P dal no 42 al no 47 Morti della Compagnia.)

VI

COPY OF THE AGREEMENT between Giovanni di Francesco Tornabuoni on the one hand, and Domenico and David on the other, for the Frescoes of Sta. Maria Novella.

Rogiti di Ser Jacopo di Martino da Firenze Filza dal 1481 a 1487.

1485. die prima Mensis Septembris. Actum Florentie in domo habitationis infrascripti Joannis sita in populo Sancti Michaelis Berteldi de Florentia presentibus Dominico Andree de Alamannis et Martino Guglielmi de Alamania testibus, etc.

Cum ad laudem magnitudinem et honorem omnipotentis Dei ac sue matris gloriose semper Virginis matris Marie beatorumque Johannis et Dominici et aliorum infrascriptorum Sanctorum ac totius denique curie Paradisi magnificus et generosus vir Johannes quondam Francisci domini Simonis de Tornabuonis civis et mercator florentinus ad presens ut asseritur patronus et jura indubitati patronatus tenens majoris cappelle site in ecclesia sancte Marie Novelle de Florentia dictam cappellam suis propriis sumptibus ac intuitu pietatis et amore Dei decorare ac nobilibus et egregiis et exquisitis et ornatis pitturis (*sic*) ornare proposuerit in exaltationem sue domus ac familie et ornationem (?) et decorem dicte ecclesie et cappelle prefate.

Idciro providus ac discretus vir Dominicus olim Thommasii corradi pittor (*sic*) et magister pitturae constitutus, etc., et ejus proprio et privato nomine ac etiam vice et nomine Dauit ejus fratris carnalis et filii quondam dicti Thommasii pro quo de rattio promisit etc. et se facturum et curaturum etc. aliter etc. locavit etc. dicto magnifico et generoso viro Johanni olim Francisci de Tornabuonis etc. operas suas dicti Dominice ac etiam dicti Davit ad standum et se exercendum et operas eorum et cujuslibet eorum dandum et prestandum in pingendo et ornando pitturis et ornamentis totam dictam majorem cappellam sitam in dicta ecclesia sancte Marie Novelle de Florentia, modis, formis, qualitatibus, picturis et ornamentis infrascriptis videlicet; Pingere et ornare testudinem dicte cappelle et ut vulgariter dicitur *el cielo* colore azzurrino et ibidem et in dicta testudine pingere quatuor evangelistas ornatos ut decens et conveniens est auri finis (*sic*) et de auro fini (*sic*) In pariete vero et seu facie dicte cappelle

in parte dextera pingere settem (*sic*) hystorias Virginis Marie quarum prima sit et esse debeat incipiendo in parte inferiori, ascendendo ad superiorem partem, Nativitatis ipsius Virginis Marie; secunda Sponsalitii, et Nuptiarum Virginis Marie; tertia Annuntiationis ejusdem; quarta Nativitatis Domini nostri Jhesu Christi cum Magis venientibus ad oblationem; quinta, Purificationis Virginis Marie; sexta Jhesu Christi pueri disputantis in medio doctorum in templo; settima (*sic*) Mortis Marie una cum duodecim Apostolis Christi.

In parte vero seu facie dicte cappelle in parte sinistra pingere settem alias hystorias quarum prima sit et esse debeat incipiendo ut supra in parte inferiori tendendo ad superiorem, Zacherie in templo; secunda Visitationis Sante (*sic*) Helysabette facte per Virginem Mariam; tertia Nativitatis Santi (*sic*) Johannis Batiste; quarta Santi Joannis euntis in desertum; quinta Predicationis ejusdem Sancti Joannis in deserto; sexta Baptismi Christi; settima Convivi Herodis et ejusdem Santi Joannis decollatio. Et Easdem hystorias pingere unam super et desuper alteram cum ornamentis et qualitatibus infrascriptis.

In parte vero è contra seu . . . altare ipsum hoc est in facie parietis in qua sunt et existunt fenestre vitree pingere in parte dextera incipiendo a parte inferiori, eundo et tendendo ad superiora figuram beati Antonini quondam Archiepiscopi florentini et desuper ipsum figuram Santi Thomme de Aquino et desuper ipsum Sanctum Thommam figuram Santi Dominici.

In parte vero sinistra ejus faciei dicti parietis pingere incipiendo in parte inferiori eundo ad superiora figuram Sante Chaterine de Senis et desuper ipsam figuram Santi Vincentii et desuper ipsam figuram Santi Petri Martiris, et desuper dictas fenestras vitreas et ibidem et indicto loco pingere Coronationem Virginis Marie cum gloria et seu representatione glorie Paradisi. Et promiserunt dicti locatores—omnes dictas hystorias figuras et pitturas pingere facere et exornare cum omnibus coloribus ut vulgariter dicitur *posti in frescho* et cum àzzurro ultramarino ubi opus esset in dictis pignus colore azzurrino et in aliis ornamentis et campis ubi opus esset colore azzurrino pingere et ornare cum azurro magno fini et omnes ricintos facere apparere marmoris et colonis marmorei cum ornamentis auri finis et cum aliis coloribus prout convenit et oportunum erit et necessarium juxta operis pulcritudinem et qualitatem: ac etiam ut vulgariter dicitur e *pilastri* dicte cappelle pingere cum fogliaminibus apparentibus coloris marmorei cum campo auri finis et capitellis ornatis auro fini et aliis coloribus condecentibus et requisitis in tali opere; et archum existentem super dictis pillastris pingere cum requadratis apparentibus coloris marmorei cum campo coloris azurini cum rosonibus ornatis auro fini. Et insuper colunnas (*sic*) dicte cappelle in parte exteriori pingere colore petrino ut vulgariter dicitur *bigio* et in omnibus dictis suprascriptis historiis et circa dictas historias et figuras et pitturas de quibus supra fit mentio et totam et universam dictam capellam (*sic*) et parietis et testudinem et archus et collunnas dicte cappelle intus et extra pingere et figuras hedifitia castra, civitates, montes, colles, planities, lapides, vestes, animalia, aves, bestias quascunque et omnes cujuscumque generis apponere

pingere et annotare et ornare ut et prout et sicut videbitur dicto Joanni secundum tamen taxationem colorum et auri de quibus supra: et omnia arma que voluerit et in qua parte voluerit dictus Johannes apponi et pingi pingere ad suam liberam voluntatem et beneplacitum.

. . . . . .

Et promisit dictus locator—dicto Johanni conductori—pingere et laborare et operari diligenter et arbitrio boni viri et perficere et perfecisse et perfectionem dedisse toti ditti operi et universe pitture dicte cappelle et totam dictam cappellam perigisse (*sic*) et ornasse—ad per totum mensem may anno domini 1490 incipiendo opus predictum de mense et initio mensis may proxime future et sic in quatuor annis proxime futuris incipiendo ut supra. Et promisit dictus magnificus vir Johannes Conductor predictus pro toto dicto opere et picturis et ornamentis et pro tota dicta conductione dicto *Dominico*—dare et soluere dicto *Dominico*—summam et quantitatem florenorum mille centum auri largor. ad rationem librarum sex pro quolibet floreno de moneta hoc modo videlicet; quolibet mense dictorum quatuor annorum Zatham tangentem, etc., etc., etc.[1]

[1] It is to be observed that nothing is said in this Contract concerning the 200 ducats which, according to Vasari, were to be given in further payment by Giovanni Tornabuoni to Domenico Ghirlandaio if the work turned out satisfactory to the former.

INDEX

NOTE.—*Names which are only mentioned casually do not, as a rule, appear in the Index. Italian names are given under the last capital, e.g. Andrea del Sarto under S; except in special instances. To save space the Ghirlandaio family are referred to under their Christian names only, as Domenico (or D.G.), David, Benedetto, Ridolfo. Places in Florence are indexed under Florence.*

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